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PM: We'll talk with Syria

By LIAT COLLINS

Israel is willing to resume talks with Syria as long as there are no preconditions, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday.

MK Azmi Bishara (Hadash), who met with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Shara for three hours yesterday, told Channel 2 by telephone from Damascus that President Hafez Assad wants to return to the negotiating table. But Bishara, in Damascus for the third time within a year, also told reporters in Israel that Syria will not give up its demand for a complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

"There is a readiness to return to negotiations when Israel shows willingness to go back to its stance of withdrawal in exchange for full peace," said Bishara.

He said there are no secret discussions and "any talk of secret diplomacy will not change that principle." Bishara said Shara told him Syria sees peace as a strategic option, but rejects the "peace for peace" formula.

Netanyahu, in an Israel Radio interview, denied news reports that Assad had sent a message offering peace with Lebanon and Syria in return for a full withdrawal from Lebanon and the Golan Heights.

"If he sent me a message, I didn't receive it... I can say our policy here is clear. We are willing to renew negotiations with Syria. But we are not ready to accept dictates that void the talks of any substance," he said.

A US Embassy spokesman declined to comment to Reuters on the report that Assad had sent a similar message to the US.

Netanyahu said Syria could restrain Hizbullah in Lebanon. "Of course, Syria has a very important role in everything that happens in Lebanon," he said.

Bishara said he did not deliver a message to Damascus, but would be glad to bring one back. However, he added, "I don't think the conditions are right now for exchanging messages."

Reuters adds: Syria and Iran have rejected Israeli threats against Lebanon and reiterated their continued support for the Lebanese resistance to Israeli occupation of south Lebanon, officials said yesterday.

They said Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi phoned Shara late on Sunday to express Tehran's solidarity with Syria and Lebanon.



President Bill Clinton and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat prepare to take part in the Mideast Peace and Development Conference in Washington yesterday. See story, Page 2. (AP)

Government okays 480 new settlement homes

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

The government yesterday authorized the construction of 480 housing units in the settlement of Kochav Ya'acov, northwest of Jerusalem. The construction of 230 housing units is under way and work on infrastructure for an additional 250 housing units has already started.

Housing Ministry spokesman Moshe Friedman said the units are being built privately, but his ministry assists in funding the infrastructure work, as it does for any communities in the designated "national priority zone."

"The units are in a new neighborhood that is within the settlement's outline plan," he added.

Peace Now declared that it is unconscionable for the government to support construction in the settlements when some 6,000 housing units in settlements remain empty.

Peace Now spokeswoman Hagit Ya'ari said the decision to build was clearly political and called on

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to halt construction. "It is a clear violation of the Wye accords," she added.

Kochav Ya'acov secretary Ya'acov Pikel said some 230 families live in his national religious community, which was established in 1984. He said the settlement plans to construct some 1,000 units, but did not give a time frame. Friedman called this unrealistic for the near future.

Kochav Ya'acov's outline plan, said Pikel, consists of some 1,300 dunams and the community is to become a local council in the future, he added.

With the second stage of the redeployment a few weeks away, Pikel said residents appear unconcerned. The army, he said, has strengthened guard positions in the community.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Legislative Council session in Ramallah yesterday declared it would fight construction in the settlements by all means at its disposal, including demonstrations.

Mordechai, Beilin clash over Lebanon

By LIAT COLLINS

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai is standing firm against a unilateral IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, despite increasing public calls for a pullout.

He told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday that the defense establishment believes there can be no withdrawal from the security zone without a partner to take responsibility for keeping the northern border quiet.

Labor MK Yossi Beilin stormed out of the committee meeting, accusing the defense minister of gambling with the lives of IDF soldiers.

Before the meeting, activists distributed copies of a book by Beilin calling for an immediate withdrawal from Lebanon, together with boxes of matches symbolizing the need to thaw the frozen situation there.

When he left, Beilin told reporters: "The defense minister sits there and hears what people have to say and then says he's not prepared to gamble. But I tell the defense minister: You are gambling every day. It is a sure bet. You know that every day another soldier can die."

Get out of there! What are you so afraid of? This is certain death!"

Beilin accused Mordechai of being "smug" and presiding over "a march of folly." He also said that high-level IDF officers, some recently retired and others still serving, have told him that the IDF need not remain in Lebanon.

Mordechai returned fire, saying, "In my opinion Beilin is wrong and is also trying to mislead others. I suggest he asks those members of his party who understand security issues - former chief of staff Ehud Barak, former OC Northern Command Ori Orr, and former OC Lebanon Ephraim Sneh - and [Meretz leader] Yossi Sarid, who once lived in Kiryat Shmona."

"For the moment, to the best of my knowledge, nobody has a better solution; and faced with the lack of a better alternative, it is wrong to my mind to sell dreams and illusions..."

Orr and Sarid both backed Mordechai, but only to a certain point, saying the solution must be a resumption of negotiations with the Syrians. Both, however, also said there can be no unilateral withdrawal.

Sneh said the defense establishment has failed in explaining to the public the importance of the security zone in protecting the North.

Mordechai told the committee that the main threat to soldiers in southern Lebanon today is from roadside bombs. Of the 21 soldiers killed there this year, he noted, 16 were killed by explosive devices.

Regarding possible solutions, Mordechai said, "The dialogue with Syria is important, but the Syrians aren't coming to negotiate and they are dictating conditions. You can delude people, but I won't gamble with security concerns." It was at this point that Beilin walked out.

At a Labor faction meeting, party leader Ehud Barak warned against creating a precedent in which terror attacks are perceived to cause Israel to pull back. He said this could send the wrong signal to the Palestinians.

Barak said Mordechai and the defense establishment are correct in their assessment that Israel cannot unilaterally withdraw.

The committee reached no conclusions and decided to hold another meeting. The US again urged Israel and Lebanon yesterday to show restraint.

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insider
ation

One in six Israelis live under poverty line

By HERB KEINON

They go to the country's outdoor vegetable markets at the end of the day and scrounge for bruised tomatoes in boxes beneath the stall where the grade A produce is sold.

They go to the neighborhood grocer every few days with no money in their pocket, and buy on credit, which is rolled over from month to month.

They live in small apartments in badly overcrowded conditions.

They are the official poor, and their number, according to figures released yesterday by Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai, is growing.

According to the figures, some 729,000 people, or 16.2 percent of the population, lived below the poverty line in 1997, a figure set at NIS 1,500 for a single person and NIS 4,300 for a family of five.

This marks a 0.2% increase from the year before.

Although statistically the increase is "slight," the real story, say experts who follow these trends, is a considerable increase in poverty over the last decade.

According to Barbara Swirski, director of the Adva Center for the Study of Israeli Society, a Tel Aviv-based policy analysis center, the number of people living in poverty has increased by almost 5% since 1985, going from 11.4% of the population to 16.2%.

The poverty rate in the US, she said, is about 13%.

"The long-term increase means that the disparity between the haves and the have-nots is growing wider," she said. "For Israel, this means there will be less solidarity. What does someone in the top income bracket have in common with someone at the bottom anymore? That some people in the upper levels argue that it is necessary to lower the minimum wage shows that they have no contact at all with someone trying to raise a family on that type of income."

Pumping from Kinneret cut by half

By DAVID RUDGE

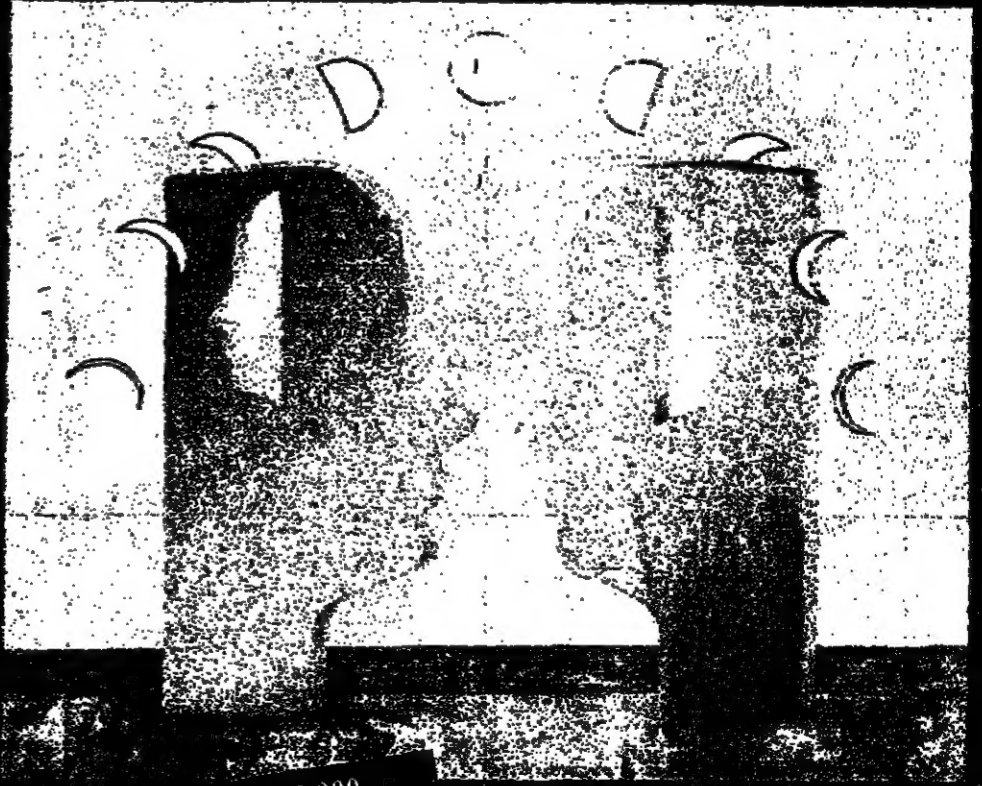
Pumping from the Kinneret into the National Water Carrier is to be cut by half from today due to the low level of the lake and the dearth of rainfall.

The decision was taken at a meeting yesterday of the national water management committee, composed of representatives of Mekorot, the Water Commissioner's Office, and the Hydrological Service, a Mekorot statement said.

It is the first reduction of this magnitude - cutting pumping from 30 million cubic meters a month to 15 million cu.m. - since the winter drought seven years ago.

The move was ordered primarily because of the level of water in the Kinneret which yesterday was just 47 cm. above a red line below which it is not allowed to drop.

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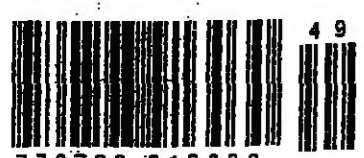


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NEWS

in brief

Student strike continues

The student leadership decided last night to continue the strike for lower tuition fees because the government has refused to expand the system of community service in return for lower fees. The government has agreed to expand the project to include 30,000 students until the end of this year and 20,000 more within two years. *Itim*

IDF may change policy on body parts' burial

The IDF is considering changing its procedure regarding the burial of body parts, OC Manpower Maj.-Gen. Yehuda Segev told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday. He was speaking following the revelations that body parts of naval commandos Raz Tabi and Guy Golan were returned and buried without their parents being informed. The committee decided to recommend to Speaker Dan Tichon that he allow MKs Ophir Pines (Labor) and Hanan Porat (National Religious Party) to raise the matter for debate in the plenum as they have demanded. *Liat Collins*

Badash resigns from Knesset

Omer Mayor Pini Badash resigned from the Knesset yesterday after six years in the House, due to the new law which bans MKs from holding two jobs. His decision is believed to have been influenced by uncertainty over his political future as a Tsomet MK. Badash is due to be replaced by Doron Shmueli, who is still on the Tsomet list, but switched to the Likud a year ago. Speaker Dan Tichon said Badash made his mark by arriving in the Knesset in sandals, which drew ridicule from his colleagues. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu commended him for his activities on behalf of the Negev. *Nina Gilbert*

Habad: We were wrong to back PM

Shabtai Bloch, the Safed Habad hassid arrested on suspicion of plotting to assassinate Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then released, was given a rousing ovation at a Sunday night rally at Kfar Habad. Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi, the rabbi of Kfar Habad, said that Bloch had been arrested in an attempt to gag Habad. All of the rabbis of Habad have decided that we were wrong to back a political candidate, said Shai Gefen, spokesman for the protesters, who took issue with Netanyahu's agreeing to pullback in the West Bank. *Haim Shapiro*

KINNERET

Continued from Page 1

Water experts said the shortfall in the water carrier, which supplies many parts of the country, would be made up by drawing from the country's two other main resources - the coastal and Yarkon Tanimim aquifers.

They stressed, however, that pumping from these and other underground sources this year has exceeded the annual average - primarily because of the hot summer, as well as increased demand.

The situation was further exacerbated by above average demand in November, for the second consecutive year, for water for irrigation. Last month was also one of

the hottest and driest for this period in dozens of years.

Rain fell in many parts of the North yesterday, but it was relatively light and no more is forecast for the rest of the week.

Mekorot officials, however, noted that the main months for precipitation are still to come. Even so, it will take a lot to replenish Kinneret where the level is 3.63 meters from maximum - the equivalent of 600 million cu.m.

Mekorot board chairman Doron Grupe noted that because of the lack of rainfall, the level of the Kinneret is 30 cm. lower than at this time last year.

He maintained that domestic consumers would not feel the effects of the reduced pumping.

POVERTY

Continued from Page 1

Avraham Doron, a Hebrew University social work professor who is considered an authority on poverty and the welfare system, said that the danger in this great disparity lies in its threat to social cohesion.

"Look at the absolute numbers, not the percentages," he said. "Imagine that many people living with so little, alongside as much wealth that exists in Israel."

This is a point of friction, Doron said, that places increasing pressure on society. "I'm not saying that at some point they will man the barricades and revolt, but it is not healthy for society."

Among these absolute numbers are 319,000 children under the poverty line.

At the press conference at which he released the figures, Yishai urged the government to change its economic policies.

According to officials the latest figures are the first in two years to

show an increase in poverty.

Senior citizens and single-parent families were the hardest hit, with the number of poor senior citizens up 3%, to 23%; the number of poor single-parent families also rose by 3%, to 28%. In addition the number of families with four children or more under the poverty line rose to 37%, from some 34%.

Yishai attributed these increases to the erosion in supplemental payments from the National Insurance Institute.

By contrast, the number of wage earners and new immigrants considered to be living in poverty dropped slightly. Yishai attributed this to the April 1997 increase in the minimum wage.

Itim adds: Shlomo Shani, head of the Histadrut trade union section, said that he will demand an 8% cost-of-living increase as a result of the increase in inflation. Public sector wage negotiations between the Treasury and the Histadrut are slated to begin tomorrow.

US pledges to give Palestinians \$400m.

By HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON - The US is pledging \$400 million toward an international effort to assist the Palestinians, along with an increase to \$100 million in its annual aid package, President Bill Clinton announced yesterday.

During the new five-year donor program, the US contribution translates into \$900 million. The US funds would go toward job creation, improving education and access to clean water, and strengthening law enforcement, Clinton said.

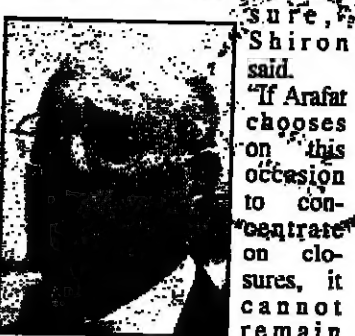
He also called on delegates of more than 40 countries gathered at the State Department to improve the situation of Palestinians and to "candidly acknowledge" that past fund-raising efforts have failed to improve their employment, living conditions, and income.

"No peace stands a chance of lasting if it does not deliver real results to ordinary people. Our challenge today, therefore, is to do more to deliver these results and to do it sooner rather than later," Clinton said.

A note of discord emerged, however, as Foreign Ministry Director-General Eytan Bentsur altered his speech after Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat criticized Israel for its closure policy.

Bentsur had intended to deliver a positive address, but instead decided to mention that Israel does not impose closures other than because "it is forced upon us because of terrorist attacks," ministry spokesman Aviv Shiron said.

Bentsur also planned to say that "whoever speaks of closures as hurting the Palestinian economy does not focus on the real issue, and has to take into account the number of lives saved by this measure," Shiron said.



Nabil Shaath
(David Rubinger)

In opening the plenary, Clinton said the purpose is "to send a clear signal that this peace is more than a piece of paper, that the promise imagined at Oslo can become a concrete reality: a true peace, a growing peace, good for Palestinians, good for Israelis, good for the region and the world."

Also yesterday, PA Planning Minister Nabil Shaath said in an interview that when Clinton travels to the region next week, he will land at the new Gaza International Airport.

Shaath said the Palestinian economy expects more than \$2 billion to be raised at the conference and at a follow-up meeting in Germany in February, including \$500 million from the European Union and \$200 million from Japan.

The funding and travel issues were discussed during a meeting between Clinton and Arafat prior to the conference.

Arafat "reaffirmed his pledge" to implement the Wye accord and to "work with Israeli authorities to promote Israel's security," Clinton said.

Speaking after Clinton left the conference, Arafat thanked the attendees for previous pledges, which he said have helped Palestinians "realize our independence" and "lay the ground for establishing a modern civilian society."

Clinton called on the attendees to send a signal to the private sector involved in the territories that theirs is "a sound investment."

"We must look at Gaza and the West Bank in a new light, not as battlegrounds, but as energetic places at the crossroads of the Middle East endowed with well-educated populations, strongly supported by the Palestinian community around the world, ripe for further development once investors see that the peace agreement truly is taking hold."

Clinton said that an improved Palestinian economy would help persuade potential young terrorists that they have "a different future to believe in," and that "every step toward opportunity is a step away from violence."

Clinton further called on countries of the Middle East to establish trade with both Palestinians and Israelis, saying that "there can be no road different from this that leads to a just and lasting peace."

Rabinovich: Syria is the key to Lebanon

By DAVID RUDGE

Syria holds the key to ensuring peace in Lebanon and along the northern border and the price has not altered, according to Prof. Itamar Rabinovich, former ambassador to the US.

Rabinovich, who was a member of Israel's delegation in the peace talks which ended in 1996, said he is skeptical of reports of a change in President Hafez Assad's stance.

"For the Syrians to resume negotiations, Assad would want some kind of expression of willingness on Israel's part for a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, although without necessarily drawing lines beforehand. This has not changed," said Rabinovich, who now holds the chair in contemporary Middle East history at Tel Aviv University.

He said Assad is unhappy with being sidelined by the Wye agreement, and this could partly explain the recent escalation in fighting in south Lebanon.

"The US and Israel, for quite some time now, decided to focus on the Palestinian issue, and the Syrians were asked to wait. They don't like that and one way for them to show their displeasure and to exert pressure is through Lebanon," he said.

He ruled out the possibility of reaching a separate security arrangement with the Lebanese government that would enable an

IDF withdrawal from the security zone.

"This has been tried on at least two occasions by the present government and both times was blocked by the Syrians," he said.

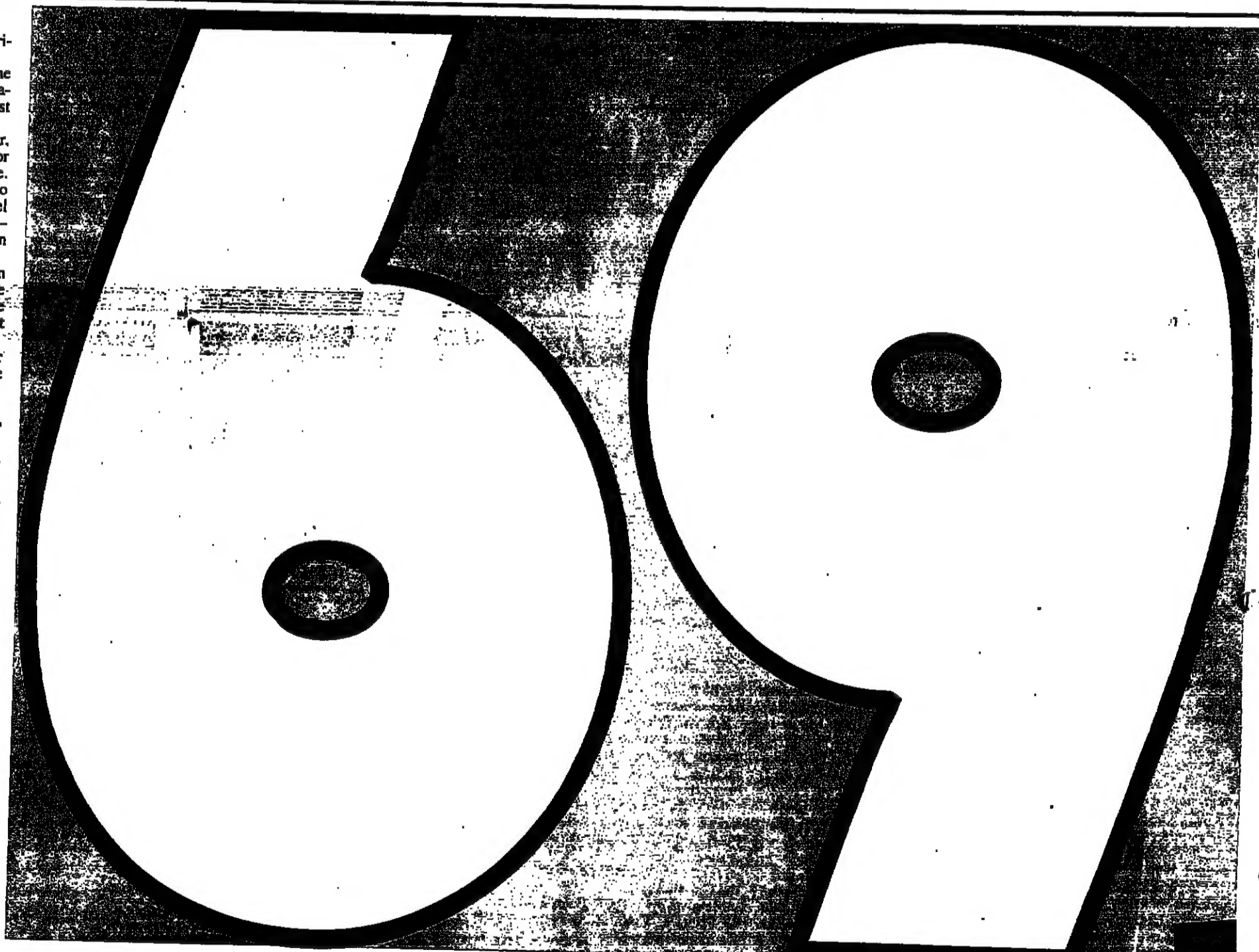
It is also extremely unlikely that the US would try to pressure Assad to accept Israel's initiative to withdraw from south Lebanon under UN Security Council resolution 425, as a confidence-building measure for future talks.

"The Americans don't feel they have enough leverage with the Syrians to do that, and in my opinion it won't happen," said Rabinovich. "On the other hand, unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon is a bad idea. The third option is to improve our military performance and try novel approaches in the security zone, while maintaining the status quo."

"This could lead to a certain amelioration of the situation. An overall solution to the Lebanon issue, however, has to be political-diplomatic. There is no military solution."

In the meantime, Rabinovich maintained that Syria is not being intimidated by calls by some politicians for strikes at Syrian interests in Lebanon in retaliation for fatal attacks on IDF troops.

"In the dispute with Turkey, there was a specific threat of war which the Syrians took seriously. They don't put the talk here of using violence against them in the Lebanon in the same category," he said.



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Tel Aviv gets new mayor
Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai (left) accepts the key to the city from his predecessor, Ronni Milo, at the transfer of office ceremony yesterday.

Mordechai: Settlements must beef up their defenses

By LIAT COLLINS

All Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria will have to take additional security measures, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday.

Settlements which do not want to adopt the protective measures suggested by the IDF will be forced to accept them, Mordechai was quoted as telling the committee.

Although he hopes the Wye agreement will be kept, Mordechai noted terror attacks may occur in the settlements just as they can happen in the center of the country.

Mordechai was accompanied by Brig.-Gen. Michael Herzog of the IDF Planning Branch. Herzog said that, under the Wye agreement, the Palestinians are gathering up illegal arms, while the US is responsible for ensuring they are taken out of use.

Regarding the redeployment, Herzog said the rule is that Area A (under sole Palestinian control) can be no closer than 1 km from a Jewish settlement and 500 meters on either side of any road that is not under Palestinian control.

He also said the joint committee with the Palestinians and the US against incitement is beginning to function, although an adviser to Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon later said that the committee head on the Israeli side, Yoash Tsidon,

had stepped down for personal reasons and a replacement had not yet been appointed.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday warned again that if Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat goes ahead with his promise to unilaterally declare an independent Palestinian state next May, Israel will quit the diplomatic process. He called Arafat's remarks on statehood "a gross violation" of the Oslo Accords.

The Prime Minister's Office issued a statement saying that if Arafat declares statehood it "will mean the collapse of the Oslo agreements." In an interview with Israel Radio, Netanyahu also repeated that Israel will not free "murderers. I do not release people with blood on their hands."

This follows the dispute with the Palestinians over which prisoners would be released under the Wye accord. On Sunday, the Palestinian negotiators walked out of talks on the prisoner release because Israel had included common criminals.

Netanyahu also said several times yesterday that Jerusalem will forever remain the united capital of sovereign Israel.

Meanwhile another possible point of friction with the Palestinians arose yesterday, when Sharon appointed two low-level officials, the ministry's Eli Avidar and a lieutenant colonel from the IDF's Planning Branch, to negoti-

ate the third redeployment. The Palestinian team is headed by Saeb Erekat, who also heads the general negotiating team.

Israel has repeatedly said that it would only hand over an additional 1 percent of Judea and Samaria and that it alone will determine where this area will be. The appointment of the low-level negotiators is being seen as underscoring the Israeli stand that there is nothing to discuss beyond this 1 percent.

At the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee meeting yesterday, MK Dan Meridor (Likud) asked whether Jerusalem is included in the calculation of Judea and Samaria for redeployment purposes. MK Yossi Beilin (Labor), one of the Oslo Accord architects, clarified that Jerusalem was kept out of these calculations under Oslo and Mordechai said territory under Israeli sovereignty is not included.

Elli Wohlgeheimer adds: Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert said Arafat's reiterated call for Palestinian statehood requires a strong Israeli reaction.

"Building in Har Homa must be speeded up, and in other places as well, including investing in eastern Jerusalem, in the Arabs residents of the city, and in Jerusalem's economy," Olmert said. "This must be done in order to attract thousands of Israelis to the city, and by doing so thwart the intentions of the Palestinians."

Census: Palestinian population 2.9 million

The final results of a Palestinian census, released yesterday, show that nearly three million Palestinians live in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and Gaza.

Hassan Abu Libdeh, head of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, said the final count was 2,995,683 - 5,000 more than in an interim count released in February.

Israel says its population is six million, including Jerusalem. Around 1.9 million people live in the West Bank and 1.02 million in Gaza. The census estimated the Palestinian population in Jerusalem at 210,209; Israel estimates 180,000.

Abu Libdeh said efforts to gather information for the first Palestinian census in Jerusalem were hindered by Israel.

"The post-enumeration results indicated that the actual popula-

tion count of East Jerusalem might be higher than the figure we provided by 83,805 persons," Abu Libdeh told an economic conference in Ramallah.

According to the census, there are 113,628 people in villages surrounding Jerusalem, which Palestinians consider Jerusalem districts.

"Despite the difficulties, Palestine has now been liberated informationally. This is a basic step on the path of establishing our independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital," said Tayeb Abdel-Rahim, representative of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Forty-seven percent of the population were found to be less than 15 years old, while 3.5% were 65 or older. The fertility rate of 6.1% is thought to be one of the highest in the world. (Reuters)

Gypsies to address Holocaust assets forum

By MARILYN HENRY

WASHINGTON - The Roma (Gypsies) today will have an unprecedented international platform to appeal for recognition of their Holocaust-era suffering and losses when the president of the International Romani Union addresses the opening plenary of the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets.

"We Roma had a common destiny with the Jews," Rajko Djuric of Berlin, the union's president, told *The Jerusalem Post*. But, he said, "For my people, truth and justice have passed us by." Forty-four countries will attend the conference, which is sponsored by the State Department as a follow-up to an international assembly last December in London that focused on Nazi gold.

Djuric and an Israeli delegate, MK Avraham Hershson, will make opening statements, along with American and British officials.

Giving the Roma equal billing with Israel at the opening plenary, validates demands for recognition and for restitution of Romani losses in Europe, observers said. And it could strengthen Romani and other non-Jewish claims for a share of the \$1.25 billion Swiss banks settlement, despite the efforts of some survivors to exclude non-Jews as potential beneficiaries.

The conference will concentrate on looted art, unpaid insurance claims and confiscated communal

property, which are primarily Jewish - not Romani - material concerns. And although Djuric will speak at the opening, there is nothing specifically Romani on the conference agenda.

Djuric said human rights abuses against the Roma still continue. "For us there was not only one Holocaust. There were also others, under communism," he said. "For us, the 12 million Roma living in Europe, apartheid is still present." Roma advocates say they are stereotyped as menacing nomads and thieves. In addition, the Roma are disorganized, fractious - and don't have a state or powerful philanthropists advocating for their rights, their advocates say.

An estimated half-million Roma were murdered between 1933 and 1945. There are no reliable estimates of Romani gold and other material assets. West German governments regularly denied Romani claims for restitution of impounded property, including houses and businesses, Romani advocates say. Other European states also retain Romani assets, including the Vatican, advocates contend.

At the London conference last year, Donald Kenrick of the British Gypsy Council claimed that the Vatican received Roma gold. The Vatican received it from the Croatian Ustashe, who looted it from some 28,000 Roma who were killed at the concentration camp in Jasenovac, according to Kenrick. That gold - if the report is true - today would be worth some £1 million.



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Coalition troubles force delay of vote on arrangements bill

By NINA GILBERT

The government faced another setback yesterday, when the lack of a majority in the Knesset forced it to again postpone a vote on the economic arrangements bill.

The bill – a host of economic reforms needed to implement the budget – was due to have been voted on together with the first reading of the 1999 state budget a month ago.

Speaker Dan Tichon said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had asked him to postpone the vote.

An official in the Prime Minister's Office said the government did not have plans to put the legislation to a vote "in the near future." The government has "other problems to address," the official said. Today, the cabinet is to hold a discussion on economic issues, including interest rates.

Labor MK Avraham Shohat said the government should resign since it "doesn't have a majority for the budget and can't deal with economic problems."

Yesterday morning, the National Religious Party was making its support of the bill dependent on

the removal of reforms that would take away discounts from senior citizens. The party declared that the passage of the bill depends on the support of its nine MKs.

The NRP voted in favor of the budget in the first reading after receiving assurances from the prime minister on free education for four-year-olds.

Likud whip Meir Sheerit had called for the bill to be voted on yesterday, saying the strength of the coalition should be put to a test. "Either it would have passed and we would see there is a coalition, or we would look for other possibilities, such as early elections," he said.

The inclusion of David Levy's Geshet faction could boost government support in the House, but even this does not guarantee a majority for the budget. Geshet is linking the support of the bill and the budget to the removal of a measure that would delay the implementation of the Public Housing Law, in addition to reorganizing the budget priorities to advance Geshet's socioeconomic platform.

However, the official said there are no plans to reformulate the

budget to meet Geshet's demands. Netanyahu also told Yisrael Ba'aliya yesterday that he does not intend to change the plan to freeze the Public Housing Law. Yisrael Ba'aliya is opposed to law, under which long-time residents would be sold government apartments at sizable discounts, arguing that it will lead to the reduction of housing for immigrants.

Changes in the economics arrangements bill will require a reformulation of the budget itself.

A month ago, the budget was passed in first reading by only one vote, when five Arab MKs absented themselves to protect the government from collapse before it could implement the Wye accord with the Palestinians.

However, Democratic Arab Party leader Abdul Wahab Darawshe said yesterday that the party would not be supporting the government anymore on the budget.

"We promised that we would punish the prime minister for his racist comments," Darawshe said, referring to Netanyahu's comment that the government would depend on Arab parties for critical national matters.



Visiting US governors (from left) George Bush of Texas, Paul Cellucci of Massachusetts, Michael Leavitt of Utah, and Mark Racicot of Montana place a wreath on the grave of Yitzhak Rabin in Jerusalem yesterday. (Brian Hendler)

Gov. Bush: I'm here to learn

By NINA GILBERT

Texas Gov. George W. Bush, visiting at the head of a delegation of Republican governors, held talks yesterday with top government officials on the peace process, the domestic political situation and strategic cooperation between Israel and the US.

The other governors are Paul Cellucci of Massachusetts, Michael Leavitt of Utah, and Mark Racicot of Montana.

Bush, who is considered a possible presidential candidate in 2000, has been tight-lipped throughout his trip, saying he is only here to "learn," and would not give opinions until returning to Texas. But he termed the country "a great place" and said he hopes to return.

The delegation met with Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon, Labor Party leader Ehud Barak, and Uzi Landau, head of the

Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. They dined with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last night.

Today, the group is to helicopter to the Golan Heights. Plans to visit the settlement of Alfei Menashe were cancelled, apparently due to concerns about possible negative reaction from Palestinians, a Foreign Ministry official was quoted as telling the AP.

In talks with Sharon, Bush asked about Israel's opinion of the US involvement in the peace process, according to a participant in the meeting.

Sharon responded by saying that the US's long-term contribution is "invaluable," and that without US involvement, "it would have been impossible to reach the peace agreements we have reached already." However, he said, "it is incumbent upon the two sides to try to reach agreements on their own before asking for US assistance."

Bush also asked Sharon how

Israel intends to proceed with the Palestinians, and he emphasized the principle of reciprocity.

Sharon presented the governors with maps of the first phase of the pullback under the Wye accord.

He also reviewed the region's water crisis, and outlined a long-term plan for building regional desalination plants that has been presented to the Washington donors' conference.

The group asked about the costs of the project, and Sharon emphasized the importance of a large-scale project to benefit from the economies of scale. He noted it can be a vehicle for cooperation and advancing the peace process.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai briefed the delegation about the peculiarities of the Middle East. He turned to Bush and said:

"We in Israel very much admire your father president Bush for the brave stance he took in the Gulf War. But Saddam Hussein is still president and this symbolizes

more than anything the absurdities of the region in which we live."

Bush was reelected to a second term in November and his visit here is believed to be part of an effort to brush up on foreign policy in advance of a possible run for the presidency in 2000. The visit is sponsored by the Republican-aligned National Jewish Coalition.

Tichon explained to the delegation the political situation and dilemmas facing the people as a whole after the Wye implementation. Bush asked him about political structure in Israel and the function of the Speaker.

In talks with Landau, the topics discussed were Israel-US strategic cooperation in light of behavior of states such as Iran and Iraq. The other topic was Israel-US cooperation on defense against ballistic missiles.

The delegation also visited the Old City of Jerusalem and Yitzhak Rabin's grave. *Arieh O'Sullivan contributed to this report.*

Six Israelis restricted for posing danger to Arabs

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Six Israelis suspected of posing a threat to Palestinians have been given orders either barring their entry into Judea and Samaria or restricting their movements in certain areas of the West Bank.

OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon recently signed the orders based on recommendations of security, police, and legal officials, military sources said.

Travel bans are only rarely used against Israelis, the military sources said, but the General Security Service has information

that these people are a danger to Arabs. They are:

- Ariel Ben-Shetreet, of Yitzhar, barred from the Nablus area for one month.

- Nira Ofen, also from Yitzhar, banned from traveling in the Nablus or Hebron areas for three months.

- Yitzhak Cohen-Sekali, of Jerusalem, and Avraham Waldman, are forbidden to enter the West Bank for three months.

- Zvi Yehuda Levi-Levine is barred from entering Judea and Samaria for six months.

- Avihai Horowitz was given a

"special restriction," which military sources declined to detail.

Margot Dudkevitch adds: Palestinian security forces have arrested Iyad Mohammed Hardan, 22, an Islamic Jihad leader in the West Bank, who is suspected of recruiting the two suicide bombers who carried out the car bombing in Jerusalem's Mahaneh Yehuda on November 6. Twenty-one people were injured in the attack.

Forces of the West Bank General Security Apparatus headed by Brig. Gen. Tawfiq Tizawi arrested last Tuesday in Jenin, Palestinian sources said.

Faction questions PM on Geshet's return

By SARAH HONIG

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the Likud Knesset faction yesterday afternoon that Geshet is only the first party with which negotiations are currently being conducted with an eye to expanding the coalition. He intimated that there are more candidates for coalition membership, but identified none.

Netanyahu also let it be understood that he prefers expanding the coalition's present base, to opting for a national unity government with an entirely new base and a new set of guidelines.

The Likud faction approved the idea of Geshet rejoining the coalition, but stressed that any agreement with Geshet and its leader David Levy will be subject to the approval of Likud forums.

The official resolution did not mention the possibility of Geshet merging with the Likud, a proposal which is already generating broad opposition.

The prime minister's presence in the closed session of the Likud faction is seen to suggest opposition to the merger conditions.

Netanyahu stressed that there is not yet agreement with Geshet. Concerning the proposal to add up to 500 Geshet delegates to the 2,700-member Likud central committee, he reported discussions on the ratio between the number of Geshet MKs who will join the coalition and the number of new Geshet central committee members in the Likud.

Geshet's loyalty to the coalition is also being examined. "No one wants to sign an agreement that will last all of two days," participants in the meeting quoted Netanyahu as saying.

Any agreement which is forged with Geshet will have to be submitted to the Likud central committee's approval, Netanyahu stated.

He denied that his public relations adviser Arthur Finkelstein had recommended that he abandon the Geshet deal. Finkelstein was said to have opposed Levy's return to the government for fear that just before the elections, Levy would take umbrage and cause Netanyahu grave political damage, as he had done before.

Some Likud insiders, however, believe that Levy is running out of options. Geshet's poor performance in the local elections had sobered him and he will not be able to keep bolting the coalition

without making a laughing stock of himself.

The battle against admitting hundreds of Geshet delegates into the Likud central committee was spearheaded by

Communications Minister Limor Livnat who called it "blatantly undemocratic. Our central committee was duly and democratically elected. The additional members would come in without an electoral process and in numbers so great as to easily upset the balance of forces in the party. This is something to which most

central committee members will simply not acquiesce. It will never come to be."

At one point Livnat and Netanyahu engaged in verbal fisticuffs.

Livnat complained that the MKs had not been informed about a meeting Netanyahu had scheduled with Likud mayors.

He replied: "I am sick and tired of your constant criticism." She countered with: "and I am fed up with your reprimands."

A similar opinion was voiced by coalition whip Meir Sheerit, MK Ze'ev Boim and the newest MK Yisrael Katz. All however welcomed the return of Geshet to the coalition.

The emerging deal was welcomed by Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, who was instrumental in furthering it, and by MKs Gideon Ezra and Reuven Rivlin, among those who sent the first feelers out to Levy.

Many of the faction members yesterday endorsed the idea that Geshet first enter the government and that the merger be taken up later. This was also proposed yesterday by Geshet MK Yehuda Lankri.

Netanyahu and Levy meanwhile have not met since the negotiations began over a week ago. Levy did meet Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, however. Mordechai did not attend the faction session but is reported to support the deal.

Did the Levy brothers feud?

The brothers Levy appeared to be quarreling yesterday and then they made up.

According to Geshet sources, David Levy's brother Maxime told his brother that he would under no conditions enter the coalition with him.

If Maxime had indeed rebelled against his brother, then David Levy's dowry for the Netanyahu coalition would have been reduced to a mere two – himself and MK Yehuda Lankri.

MK Michael Kleiner heads the Knesset Land of Israel Front and has announced that he will not vote with the government.

MK David Magen has been estranged from Geshet for a long time. He suspended his membership in the party and announced that he has no intention of going back.

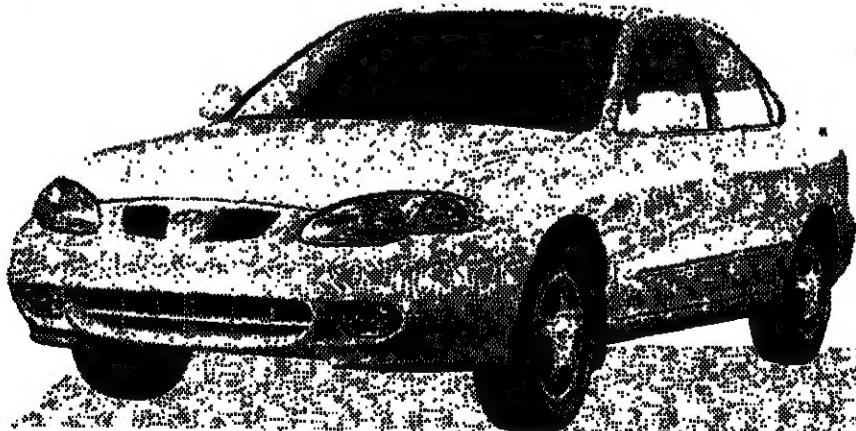
However, Geshet sources advise *The Jerusalem Post* to treat news of Maxime Levy's threats cautiously. This may have been nothing but a bargaining ploy on behalf of David Levy rather than an indication of differences between the brothers. It is noted in Geshet that Maxime Levy often played the "bad cop" in dealings with the Likud, but in the end loyally toed his brother's line. *Sarah Honig*

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(13 Kislev 5859) at 3 p.m. at the Nahalat Yitzhak Cemetery.

Children:

Alisa and Moshe Baginski

Benjamin and Chava Feuchtwanger

Grandchildren:

Kinereth and Baruch Palti

Michal and Eran Gilad

Noa and Avi Abulafia

Lilli and Motti Feuchtwanger-Markovits

Shira and Ronnie Calderon

Ehud Feuchtwanger

Dispute threatens Mamilla project

By ELI WOHLGELER

The NIS 500 million Mamilla project, just outside Jerusalem's Old City, is again being threatened with derailment over a dispute between the developer, Alrov Ltd., and Carta, the company for the development of central Jerusalem, which owns the project.

Alrov, headed by Alfred Akroff, is threatening to sue Carta for not signing on the company's building permit applications, which it attributes to the high number of religious Jews on Carta's board of directors. Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush might also be sued, over his having appointed religious members to the board.

This is the second time this year that Akroff has threatened to halt development of the project. The Jerusalem Post reported on March 13 that Carta had rejected Akroff's plan to convert 2,000 square meters of designated public space into more shops and a domed restaurant.

According to project manager Danny Golan, the obstacles being presented by Carta are "not for the benefit of the Carta company, but for some other reasons [such as] keeping the Shabbat, which has nothing to do with the purposes of Carta. Carta is a company that should make profit... so they are really working against the purposes of their company. And they are

a public company that belongs to the government, so we can sue them."

Shmuel Casper, chairman of Carta, said the reason Carta is refusing Akroff's requests is because "these building plans contradict the zoning plans. The bottom line is he wants to expand his building rights by another 2,000 meters, and the board of directors says no. He wants to do it at the expense of the pedestrians, and we want those pedestrian walkways to be open, and he wants to close them and annex them to the shops."

Casper added that Porush has nothing to do with the project, a point reiterated by Housing

Ministry spokesman Moshe Eilat. "We have no connections, we are not involved in it," Eilat said. "Porush appoints directors. The minute they are appointed, he has nothing whatsoever to do with the company - the company runs by itself. He appoints people who are capable and able to run the business, and he tells them, 'From now on, this is your baby. You do what you think should be done for the good of the company.' They [Alrov] can say whatever they want, but the address is not Porush."

Golan said that in a few weeks "I will finish the work that I can do with the permits that I have in hand," and after that the project

will be stopped.

The commercial center was scheduled to open on January 1, 2000.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert criticized Carta's role in the project, saying that "they're partners in this project in which they don't invest a thing, and suddenly they started dealing with problems which are really none of their business... They came to an agreement with Mr. Akroff about operating on Shabbat and not operating on Shabbat, and that's an issue which Mr. Akroff decided according to his own judgement. I do not want to interfere in it, but there was certainly pressure not to have cinemas over there."

NEWS

in brief

Youth gets 8 years in WIZO counselor murder

Tel Aviv District Court yesterday sentenced a teenage girl to eight years in prison and two years' probation for assisting in the murder of Tomer Hirsh, a counselor at a WIZO boarding school in Nahalat Yehuda last year. The girl was recently convicted of purchasing the knife used by her teenage boyfriend to slit Hirsh's throat. The boyfriend was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Court wants explanation of spending criteria

The High Court of Justice yesterday ordered Education Minister Yitzhak Levy to show within 15 days why he should not stop the criteria for allocations for Zionist Torah institutions or, alternately, change them to make them egalitarian. It also ordered that these allocations be stopped in the interim. The rulings came in response to petitions from the Reform movement's Israel Religious Action Center and MKs Ofer Pines and Avraham Shohat (both Labor). IRAC attorney Victor Weinberger said the criteria are a sophisticated way of evading the ban on special allocations for religious institutions. On Friday, he said, the ministry supplied a list of institutions which had applied and all of them were identified with the National Religious Party.

Police officer, wife arrested in IDF scandal

Dep.-Com. Yitzhak Liron, who is chief of the traffic department in the central region, and his wife Meital, a social worker, were arrested yesterday on suspicion of helping some 60 soldiers lower their profiles fraudulently so that they could be moved from front-line units to more comfortable jobs or win outright exemptions. Meital Liron is suspected of passing false information on soldier's family circumstances, and their medical and psychological state. She also advised families on how to present their sons' cases falsely to the military authorities. Yitzhak Liron is suspected of aiding his wife in the fraud. More arrests are expected, police said.

'Sabbath observant' metal detector developed

A metal detector has been developed by a local company that says it permits observant Jews to be checked without fear of violating the Sabbath. The company, Hashmira Technologist Migun, recently sold 10 units of the device, which it says does not complete an electric circuit to trigger an alarm buzzer or light when detecting metal objects. Instead, said manager Michael Adiv, the device employs a moving needle which silently swings into a red zone to indicate suspicious metal objects. It was developed in cooperation with Rabbi Yisrael Rosen of the Tzomet Institute, Adiv said.

Illegal trader caught with Bar Kochba coins

The Antiquities Authority yesterday warned against a surge in illegal trade of antiquities in advance of the millennium, following the arrest over the weekend of an unauthorized dealer trying to sell rare bronze coins dating from the Bar Kochba revolt. The man admitted the violation and was freed on NIS 5,000 bail.

The expected arrival of millions of tourists next year has led merchants to begin stockpiling antiquities in expectation of future sales, often relying on unauthorized dealers, 16 of whom have been arrested since the beginning of the year. The Antiquities Authority notes that unauthorized trade in artifacts is a felony punishable by up to two years in prison.

Darawshe: Umm el-Fahm liable to reignite

By NINA GILBERT

The failure to reach an equitable solution on the land dispute in Umm el-Fahm will lead to more bloodshed. MK Abdul Wahab Darawshe Arab (Democratic Arab Party) warned the Knesset Interior Committee yesterday.

He said the government's policy would "lead to a conflagration with the Arab sector."

Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav, responsible for Arab affairs, blasted Darawshe for "giving legitimization" to the clashes. He said the government would not make its decisions based on ultimatums.

Katsav said he expected Arab MKs to calm tempers, instead of making declarations of impending, renewed violence in Umm el-Fahm.

However, chairman Micha Goldman agreed with Darawshe's assessment, saying the situation could lead to renewed riots throughout the Arab sector at the end of the month.

Last night, the Knesset rejected 29-30 an opposition proposal to establish a parliamentary commission of inquiry into the expropriation of land and police behavior in the riots, in which scores of police and demonstrators were injured.

The government managed to muster enough MKs to reject the proposal, which government Knesset liaison Michael Eitan termed as "a political move," saying the government has other tools to investigate the matter.

Meretz MK Yossi Sarid had called for the commission to

examine closely the behavior of Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani and Education Minister Yitzhak Levy.

After the riots in Umm el-Fahm in September, it was agreed to take a break until the end of December to try to reach a solution.

In a letter sent to Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, Goldman warned that time is running out and no solution has been reached, with no coordination with Arab leaders in the region. He called on Mordechai to work for a speedy resolution.

However, Katsav emphasized that the ministerial committee set up to reach a solution has not yet finished its deliberations, and will be meeting with Umm el-Fahm Mayor Raed Salah and the land owners before the end of the month.

At the same time, Katsav said it had been determined that the territory in question, known as section 107, is vital to the needs of the IDF. He said the government wants a solution that will enable the farmers to continue to tend to the fields, while the IDF uses it as part of its firing zone.

The riots, which spread to Arab towns in the Galilee, was triggered by the IDF's expropriation of 520 dunams (130 acres) in the Wadi Ara region to expand its firing zone area.

Goldman, who said the committee would meet again on the issue in three weeks, called for rapprochement between the sides. He acknowledged that while IDF bases must be moved inside of Israel, it must not harm neighboring relations and be done in coordination with land owners.

Veteran 'Post' journalist Hugh Orgel dies at 85

Hugh Orgel, one of the most distinguished senior Israeli journalists and former head of the Tel Aviv bureau of The Jerusalem Post, has died aged 85.

Orgel was one of the mainstays of The Palestine Post during the War of Independence. His leading articles, reports, and regular "Marginal Column" features followed Israel's development over many years.

Born in 1913 in London, Orgel immigrated as a member of the British Hahabonim movement in 1938. In World War II he enlisted with his wife, Lena, in the Palestinian R.A.O.C. units of the British Army and reached the rank of captain in 1944.

Orgel was the first Israeli journalist invited to tour Britain by its Foreign Office in 1953. The following year he was appointed press attaché and spokesman of the Israeli Embassy in Washington. In 1960 he became Foreign Ministry spokesman.

He worked as public relations officer for Haifa's Technion in 1962 and for El Al until 1965.

He returned to the Foreign Ministry in 1967 and after the Six Day War became Israel's spokesman at the UN.

In 1970 Orgel joined Reuters and in 1988 the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

He is survived by his wife, two daughters, and two grandchildren. The funeral will take place at the Yarkon Cemetery at noon today.

Alexander Zvielli



Jerusalem AIDS Project activists sheath a downtown parking-card vending machine with a giant condom yesterday, to help raise awareness about World AIDS Day today. (Brian Hendler)

Survey: 40% of high schoolers not taught about AIDS

By JUDY SEGEL

Two-fifths of senior and junior high school pupils have never heard any mention in school of AIDS, according to a telephone survey of teenagers by the Jerusalem AIDS Project in advance of World AIDS Day, to be marked today.

Of those aged 17 to 19, 36% never received any guidance about the subject, compared to 32% of those aged 20 to 22. The survey found that pupils who had learned about AIDS were much more tolerant towards AIDS patients and HIV carriers than those who had not, and over half would be willing to invite an HIV carrier to their home for a social exchange; 34% would refuse. Those identifying themselves as religious or haredi were much less open to such a meeting - 55% of them wouldn't even consider it.

Regarding HIV testing, 26% said they have no

interest in being tested, while 65% favor anonymous blood testing for the virus instead of having to show identity cards (Health Ministry policy).

Sixty percent of those aged 14 to 20 said they had not had sex during the past year; of those who had, 43% used a condom, 21% of the girls took a contraceptive pill, and 8.7% used no means of contraception.

Jerusalem AIDS Project director Inon Schenker said the results prove the sexual activity of Israeli youth is becoming more like that in Western countries.

Deputy Health Minister Shlomo Benizri of Shas reportedly protested against the Health Ministry's posters and booklets for World AIDS Day that showed rolled-up condoms, and some of the posters were torn down.

Kupat Holim Clalit will accept questions on AIDS at (03) 638-8894 and answer them tomorrow on Radio 103 FM.

Ministry: Health funds must provide in-vitro treatments

By JUDY SEGEL

Starting January 1, none of the health funds will be allowed to refuse in-vitro fertilization treatments to infertile couples recommended by a physician, the Health Ministry said yesterday.

During the last half year, the Maccabi health fund drastically cut the number of IVF treatments for its members. In 1997, it spent NIS 42 million on IVF for 4,000 women, but this summer, due to budgetary constraints, it said it would approve treatment for only 10% of applicants.

After it was taken to court, Maccabi gradually increased the

number of women it accepted.

According to the National Health Insurance Law, which went into effect on January 1, 1995, after a three-year interim period, all the health funds would have to provide a uniform basket of services instead of what they had been giving before the law took force.

Health Minister Yehoshua Matza extended this a year ago, but not regarding IVF treatments.

However, he decided yesterday to appoint a nine-member committee of experts to prepare medical directives on IVF that would be binding on all the health funds.

Maccabi spokeswoman Sarit Greenberg said management "is convinced, along with representatives of the other health funds and representatives of the ministry's supreme advisory committee on gynecology, that a decision would be made to allow a maximum of seven rounds of IVF treatment for each infertile woman." Fertility experts agree that any more could be harmful to the patient, she said.

Neither Maccabi nor ministry officials could say how many women who underwent IVF had more than seven rounds of treatment, each of which costs thousands of shekels.

"You Can't Dance With A Murderer"

We are all extremely grateful to Mohammed Dahlan, the Palestinian Security Chief, for his frank admissions in an interview in Gaza, as reported on the front page of The Jerusalem Post of Sunday, November 22, 1998. Dahlan put it this way: "Why did we ask to release the political prisoners?...because it was us - myself, Mr. Arafat and Abu Mazen- who sent them out on their operations in the first place."

For those of us who entertained only a suspicion heretofore, we now have it authenticated from an unimpeachable source that it was Arafat and his cohorts who, despite entering into the Rabin-Peres-Arafat Oslo Accords, were consciously and surreptitiously violating the specific terms therefore from the very outset. Despite what Arafat was promising Rabin in a personal letter renouncing terror, he was in fact simultaneously actively engaged in promoting violence and terror against his peace partner. Never mind that his actions were in direct contradiction to both the specific terms of Oslo. More important, it revealed that Arafat was laughing up his sleeve at naive Peres and Rabin for having chosen him, an unrelenting terrorist, as their peace partner. The message has become crystal clear: The word, or even specific writings of commitment from such a peace partner as Arafat and/or the PLO, is of no value whatsoever, and cannot be relied on, neither now nor in the future.

It is therefore not an unfounded rumor that Arafat has requested of Hamas that they temporarily refrain from acts of violence against Jews and the State of Israel. That is, at least until Israel fulfills what Arafat and the U.S. persuaded Netanyahu to do under Wye,

to turn over further large sectors of its small national homeland to Arafat and the PLO. Such a ploy is entirely consistent with the Arafat and PLO overall strategy of destroying Israel in stages. The sudden temporary turning off of the tap of violence - of stone throwing, fire bombs and the like, moreover, is no mere coincidence. Such surprising concerted behavior on the part of the Arab community as a whole throughout Israel, Judea, Samaria and Gaza gives the lie to what Arafat has been saying all along. When requested to control such terror, his reply in the past has been that he cannot control these isolated maverick, and individual acts. When he really wanted to however, his message got through to the Arabs. He simply told them in effect: "Don't upset the apple cart at a time when I have maneuvered the Jews into foolishly giving away their land free of charge or obligation." With such a "peace partner", there is no possibility of a real and lasting peace.

Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon recognized this from the very outset of Oslo. On September 3, 1993 he wrote an Op-Ed article in the Jerusalem Post, entitled, "You Can't Dance With A Murderer." Sharon, there, prophetically stated: "...By recognizing this murderer's organization, the PLO, the government has committed an act of madness. By reviving Israel's greatest enemy on the eve of its disintegration and turning it into Israel's shield against Hamas, the government has added crime to folly ... There can be no reconciliation, historic or otherwise, with the man who ordered the murders of schoolchildren in Avivim, Ma'alot and Antwerp, of eleven Jewish athletes in Munich..." What say you now, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon?

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In a democracy, even the undemocratic can deliver the goods.

Thus, during a week in which the British House of Lords was the butt of domestic humor and scorn for clinging to its hereditary pretensions, its Law Lords turned the tables with a vengeance, delivering a brief, elegant ruling that has sent international lawyers reeling.

The ruling of the supreme British legal authority is no less significant than one of the US Supreme Court when it creates a legal precedent that sends shockwaves beyond its frontiers. Since the equally astonishing and unexpected arrest of Chilean Gen. Augusto Pinochet in London on a Spanish extradition warrant for the murder of Spanish citizens, the news focus has been on the man and his brutal rule, his crimes against decency and humanity, and on the protests for and against his arrest.

The Law Lords ruling, that Pinochet is not entitled to legal immunity for crimes against humanity because he was a head of state, has switched the focus from the man himself to the dictators of the world. The all-American class-action lawsuit has been given unbelievable new potential power by a few sentences from a crusty, old British institution.

Divine wrong

No one summed it up better than the French newspaper *Libération* with its simple headline: "Tyrants, tremble!" The victims are coming back to haunt them.

Now that the legal deed has been done, its logic becomes as blindingly simple as those scientific breakthroughs that make one say, "Why didn't I think of that?"

For centuries, there has developed a creeping consensus that rulers are governed by different rules than the ruled. It began with the self-serving "divine right of kings" theology, and evolved into the concept of "lawmakers above the law."

The right of rulers to abuse the ruled is an extension of the strange human rule that a civilian who kills a stranger goes to prison for life (or even to execution in America), but if he puts on a uniform and kills a stranger, he may get a medal. Thus, a person who has the power to order people to kill is automatically justified, and immune. He may even become a hero or a legend.

Pinochet is that granite-faced, holier-than-thou fascist who murdered an elected head of state, seized power, changed the Chilean constitution to make the illegal retroactively legal, and who had his opponents tortured, murdered or made to disappear. But he loves his mother, his wife, his Catholic church, and he ran a good economy.

Straw poll

So, there are crowds in Santiago demonstrating vociferously in his favor, and against the British and the Spanish for arresting him. Why? Because he made them prosperous and,

being righteous, they have no relatives rotting in unmarked military-compound graves.

A former democratically elected British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, has come out against the British government and legal system in support of the dictator Pinochet. Why?

Because for self interest, he helped Britain in Thatcher's nasty little Falklands war against Chile's old enemy Argentina.

It is this ever-increasing confusion between immorality and expediency that the Law Lord's ruling has slashed through like a scimitar. There is

no guarantee that expediency will not continue winning in the short term — no one should be surprised if British Home Secretary Jack Straw does not decide to ignore the Law Lords and send Pinochet home anyway.

But, judging by the acreage the ruling has generated in the serious and legal media, this is a judgment that will be looked back on as a milestone on the crooked path of human progress. There was a time when people considered whatever nastiness went on in the privacy of their neighbors' homes as none of their business. But no longer is it acceptable to know that a woman is being beaten or a child abused down the road and to do nothing. Same, same for other people's murderous dictators.

There's a problem?

Why did no member of the United Nations stand up and issue a warrant to arrest Pol Pot (before his recent death) for his genocide of the Cambodian people? Australia, for example, could easily have done so, as Spain has done over Pinochet, since Australian tourists were among the million tortured to death by the disgusting Pol Potites. And why isn't Israel more active and vocal in demanding the prosecution of those responsible for horrific genocides like Cambodia and Rwanda, under the "never again" principle.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, said the Law Lords Pinochet ruling should "hearten the defenders of human rights around the world."

It may be the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but Mrs. Robinson is unlikely to see the major progress in her lifetime under the new Law Lords principle of "get the bastards wherever they are."

Idi Amin is still around, so is Baby Doc Duvalier, but where are the warrants? Slobodan Milosevic is still carving out his own killing fields. Saddam Hussein is still trying to find some way to make the planet his personal Kuwaiti desert. Where are the warrants?

A French politician indignantly said that if the Law Lords ruling were actively pursued, half of those attending this week's French-African summit in Paris would end up in handcuffs.

They would? I don't have a problem with that.

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

Baghdad isn't beaten yet

Despite the wars, the US air raids and the sanctions that brought an oil-rich people to poverty, the legendary Iraqi capital is struggling again to take flight

By HOWARD SCHNEIDER

BAGHDAD — The day he saw this city's graceful 14th of July Bridge lying in the Tigris River, a casualty of American missiles during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, poet Abdul Razak Abdul Wahid was reminded of a wounded bird, its wings broken and struggling.

"I thought of all the lovers who met on that bridge," said Wahid, who incorporated his thoughts into a poem to commemorate the bridge's subsequent reopening. "I have seen old people weep on that bridge, and all I could think was, what was the benefit of destroying it?"

Like the bird in Wahid's poem, Baghdad is struggling again to take flight. Built by the Moslem caliph al-Mansur in the 8th century, the legendary Iraqi capital, once a center of world culture and trade, has suffered in the last two decades through disastrous wars with Iran, the US-led coalition that drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait and eight years of crippling international trade sanctions. Residents, or at least those who remain optimists, say they expect to recapture the city's past glory someday.

"There was war and then sanctions, and everything is frozen now," said Khader Duleimi, publisher and editor of the government-owned *Baghdad Observer*, an English-language newspaper. "We are trying to come to terms with this situation. We know that it is something artificial. It is not a reality. Once we have the embargo lifted, Baghdad will recover."

As it is, the 8-year-old trade embargo, and the ever-present threat of renewed military action over UN weapons inspections, have rendered Baghdad a study less in grandeur than in ambiguity. It is a place where gloomy economic circumstances coexist with a lively local stock market, new cafes and coffeehouses; where a focused effort to restore war-damaged infrastructure is occurring alongside indulgent investments in new palaces and public art; where a people accustomed to free health care, education and other benefits of oil wealth have adjusted to a time when wages have been devalued to almost nothing and it is sometimes impossible to find an aspirin in a store.

THE bombing of Baghdad was among the more controversial aspects of the Persian Gulf War, mixing military targets — such as the Defense Ministry and communications towers — with those of less-obvious strategic value, such as the local convention center and the city's power grid.

Today, there is little evidence of the damage. Collapsed bridges have been rebuilt, the streets have been repaired, and the water and electricity systems have been patched together well enough for the city to function. Major government facilities have been reconstructed.

"Baghdad within two years had been rebuilt, after a pounding" during the US-led air campaign, said Philippe Heffinck, head of the UNICEF mission in Iraq. "It was important to show that this city had the power to rehabilitate... They did it brilliantly."

Some may question the government's priorities, however. While



The Saddam Tower now dominates the Baghdad skyline, complete with a posh revolving restaurant on top. (AP)

begging children are inescapable, and middle-class Iraqis have been reduced to shining shoes and other jobs that were once the province of 2 million guest workers from Egypt and elsewhere, construction is under way on the latest of several massive palaces built in the capital since the war.

Heavy equipment is also leveling land for the Saddam Mosque, advertised as the Islamic world's largest house of worship. In the spot where a concrete communications building was destroyed during the war, the Saddam Tower

now dominates the Baghdad skyline, complete with a posh revolving restaurant on top and a park with children's rides at the base.

"It's 203 meters" (670 feet high), an attendant said proudly as he escorted visitors around the grounds, pointing out the tiny sculptured heads of former President Bush and other Gulf War coalition leaders scattered on the shoes of a 20-foot-tall statue of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The tower is emblematic of Baghdad today.

At the top, the restaurant spins at

other problems too expensive to fix.

The city survives in much the same way. No one knows that better than Raad Gazi, director of the Doura power station, one of three large oil-fired plants that supply Baghdad's electricity.

The war was a disaster for the city's power supply. As at the other stations, the Doura plant was blanketed with the filaments that spewed from special US missiles, shorting out transformers and left Baghdad in darkness. The station's main building and one of its

a leisurely pace, the tables are crisply set, the friendly staff is standing at attention. But, in the middle of a recent Friday night, only one table was occupied.

From the observation deck, the city's main monuments — the vaulted, oval Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the nearby Victory Sword, composed of four large blades slicing the sky and resting atop helmets taken from dead Iranian soldiers — are well lit and obvious. So are the large swaths of darkness in neighborhoods afflicted with power outages.

At the tower's base, the children's rides are a swirl of festive color. The park itself is deserted.

PERHAPS a better symbol of contemporary Baghdad than Wahid's struggling bird is a cracked windshield. Despite the economic embargo, the city's cars and trucks and buses keep running, patched together with ingenuity and the few spare parts that people can find and afford. But few vehicles are without broken glass, dented bodies, smoking exhaust pipes or other problems too expensive to fix.

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emissions stacks also were hit directly, he said.

Within a few months the plant was repaired sufficiently to begin generating electricity again, he said, but it has never been able to run at more than half of its 640-megawatt capacity. Even sustaining that is a challenge, given the lack of spare parts. Rather than replace faulty boiler tubes, for example, workers patch holes with welds, knowing they will likely have to repeat the process in a month or two.

"It's too much," Gazi said. "You get crazy sometimes." To make do with diminished capacity, Gazi said, he and other electricity managers in Baghdad rotate blackouts around the city, taking neighborhoods and businesses off-line for anywhere from three to six hours daily, and sometimes longer.

IN some respects, life in Baghdad is defined by the daily struggle between the abnormality imposed by sanctions and the urge to live as if they did not exist.

Drinking the tap water, for example, is a dubious proposition.

Years of inadequate maintenance have left the city's water system, once state of the art, riddled with leaks. UN officials say. Because of the power outages, and the subsequent loss of pressure, sewage can contaminate the drinking-water supply — a phenomenon reflected in the high rates of typhoid and gastrointestinal disease in the city.

"Before, we lived well," said Nahday Nahamy, director of the Museum of Challenge, a collection of before-and-after scale models of buildings destroyed during the war and subsequently rebuilt. "We'd go on picnics and visit friends. Now it's different. Picnics are very expensive."

Nahamy said she recently sold her car because it was too expensive to repair. She is frustrated with the daily electricity outages and worries about whether the water from her faucet will make her sick.

All the same, she said, "Baghdad still exists." "I saw my country devastated completely," she added. "We are very strong now. And I don't speak just for myself. We continue to live." (The Washington Post)

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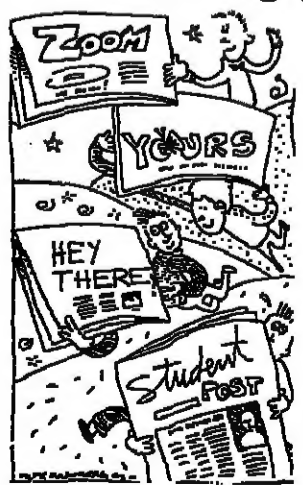
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Clinton to send Shalala to Lebanon

By CHRISTINE HAUSER

CAIRO (Reuters) — US President Bill Clinton is sending Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala to Lebanon as his personal representative to meet its new president after the country's leadership. Shalala, who is of Lebanese origin and the highest-ranking Arab-American to serve in a US cabinet, will be the first member of the Clinton administration to visit Lebanon after this month's inauguration of Lebanese President Emile Lahoud.

Her visit, intended to send a signal to Beirut of Washington's desire to strengthen ties, was planned before the announcement on Monday that Lahoud had accepted caretaker Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's refusal to head a new government.

"I think the fact that it is an official trip representing the president of the United States, it can be interpreted as a warm sign to the people of Lebanon and to their new president and new government of the importance that the United States places on our relationship with Lebanon and how pleased we are that at least some of the security issues are beginning to be resolved," Shalala told reporters in Cairo on Sunday.

She said her visit to Lebanon is intended to "indicate that the United States is anxious to help the new government get settled and to improve the quality of our relationship."

She said she would go to Beirut after a visit to Egypt ending today, and to Israel and the West Bank, but could not be more specific because of security considerations.

Last year, Washington lifted a decade-old civilian travel ban imposed during Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war. It still considers the country a dangerous place to visit and US airlines do not fly to Beirut, but the two countries are slowly rebuilding ties.

This month, US Commerce Secretary William Daley said in a short trip to Beirut that his department was establishing a representative office in the Lebanese capital.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spent a few hours in Lebanon last year. Shalala said her stay would be the longest.

"I'll be the first cabinet member who will stay overnight. So I'll be there for a number of days," she said. "It's officially designated by the president as a presidential visit." Lebanon is rebuilding its economy after the war and is keen to lure foreign investment.

Lahoud has pledged to make law enforcement a priority.

"I am taking no secret messages to the government of Lebanon. I am simply going to go and most of us have not been there in 20 years," Shalala said.

"I think this is a longer visit to not simply contact the leaders but to look at Lebanon's recovery, and it will allow me to report back to the president after getting out of Beirut and having a chance to talk to people."



Bosnian Serb Goran Jelusic sits during hearing at the Yugoslavia War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, in this October 29 file photo. Jelusic pleaded guilty to 12 murders and faces a maximum life prison term, but pleaded innocent to genocide. (AP)

Bosnian prison guard 'modeled self on Hitler'

By CHRISTINE LUCASSEN

THE HAGUE (Reuters) — Former Bosnian Serb prison camp guard Goran Jelusic — said to have modeled himself on Adolf Hitler — went on trial for genocide at the Yugoslavia war crimes tribunal on Monday.

Jelusic, 30, last month pleaded guilty to a string of murders of Muslims, but maintained he was innocent of the UN court's most serious charge — genocide.

According to the genocide charge, Jelusic boasted about his exploits and told detainees he was modeling himself on Hitler.

"He introduced himself as the 'Serb Adolf' ... and often informed Muslim detainees and others of the number of Muslims he had killed," the indictment says.

Prosecutors at the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia have yet to secure their first genocide conviction.

Fellow accused Milan Kovacevic died in tribunal custody in August two weeks into his trial.

If convicted, Jelusic could face a life prison sentence. His guilty plea to crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war could also carry life imprisonment.

Prosecutors charge that Jelusic was instrumental in the systematic killing of "countless" Muslim detainees in Serb-run Luka prison camp in Brcko, northern Bosnia in 1992.

The murders marked an attempt to "destroy a substantial or significant part of the Bosnian Muslim people as a national, ethnic, or religious group," according to the indictment.

Jelusic has admitted a murder spree spanning a two-week period in May of 1992.

Every day during this period, he would select detainees for interrogation and subsequently kill them.

Prosecutors allege he was responsible for many more deaths than the 12 killings to which he has already pleaded guilty.

Jelusic had originally pleaded not guilty to the old indictment. But in what he called an effort to "clean his soul", he admitted to the 12 murders under an amended indictment.

He also accepted charges he was involved in four beatings and one incidence of plunder.

The defense has argued that Jelusic, who was snatched by NATO troops in his home town of Bijeljina in January, has been suffering from psychological problems.

The trial is expected to last into early next year. Then the judges will pass verdict on the genocide charge and sentence Jelusic for the related guilty plea to crimes against humanity and violations of the customs of war.

Jelusic is one of 25 indicted in the tribunal's custody. The tribunal, set up in 1993 to prosecute those guilty of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, has issued 19 public indictments against 55 individuals, plus a number of sealed indictments.

Mass grave with over 25 bodies unearthed in Iraq

CAIRO (AP) — A mass grave containing more than 25 bodies has been unearthed near a farm in eastern Iraq, human rights activists with ties to an Iraqi opposition group said yesterday.

The Center for Human Rights said the grave was discovered on October 15 by Jubeir Abdullah Alaywi, who was digging near his farm in Diyala province, 40 miles northeast of Baghdad.

The group, affiliated with the London-based Iraqi Communist Party, said security men arrested Alaywi shortly after he found the grave, and said his family still does not know where he was taken.

The group did not say who was behind the deaths of those found in the grave, but reiterated its complaints about President Saddam Hussein's regime.

"We once again call on the UN human rights organizations to take urgent steps to put an immediate halt to the continuing mass terror," the group said in a statement faxed to the Associated Press in Cairo.

The statement also said four Iraqi political prisoners, including two officers, were executed on November 12 in Mosul. It named them as Maj. Mehdi Saleh Rakan and Capt. Omar Taha Salem.

Iraq has been systematically executing political prisoners, some of whom had been in detention since Saddam crushed an abortive Shi'ite uprising in 1991.

In April, the UN human rights commissioner responsible for Iraq, Max van der Stoep, said up to 1,500 people may have been executed in Iraq last year.

Turkey angry with Italy over rebel leader's return

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey is angry over Italy's refusal to return Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which has been fighting for autonomy in Turkey's southeast since 1984.

Military and civilian leaders were to meet over the issue yesterday and make an expected official extradition request. Ocalan was arrested November 12.

"The Italian government has manipulated the problem in a very wrong, bad and insulting way," President Suleyman Demirel said Sunday.

Demirel accused the West of having double standards and of not applying international agreements against terrorism to the Ocalan case. Turkey holds Ocalan responsible of the deaths of tens of

thousands of people.

After fighting for over a decade, Turkey's military claims it has all but eradicated the PKK in the southeast. It repeatedly called on civilian leaders to take over the battle against separatism, by investing in the impoverished southeast.

But politicians have failed to attract investments, and the region remains stricken by unemployment — one of the factors that is said to push Kurds toward joining the PKK.

Italy has further infuriated the Turks by calling for a political dialogue on the Kurdish problem.

The council meeting follows a solemn ceremony at Ankara's main mosque for the 16 soldiers killed on Friday when PKK rebels downed a helicopter near the Turkish-Iraqi border.

Gaddafi: US, Britain must drop Lockerbie terms

TUNIS (Reuters) — Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi said the United States and Britain must drop their conditions if they want a trial of two Libyan suspects in the Lockerbie bombing to take place in the Netherlands, the official Libyan news agency JANA reported yesterday.

"We challenge America and Britain not to set conditions which are bound to be firmly rejected for holding that trial and if they wanted it be held and solve this issue," the agency, monitored in Tunis, quoted Gaddafi as saying.

Gaddafi, who was talking at a banquet in the Libyan coastal town of Sirte in honor of visiting Gambian President Yahya Jammeh, did not say to which US and British conditions he was referring.

The two alleged Libyan intelligence agents, Abdel Megrahi and Lamien Fhimah, are accused of planting a bomb on Pan Am Flight 103 which exploded over the Scottish village of Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988. All 259 people aboard the plane were killed, as were 11 on the ground.

WORLD in brief

Ford, GM fight allegations of Nazi collaboration

WASHINGTON — Three years after Swiss banks became the target of a worldwide furor over their business dealings with Nazi Germany, two US car companies find themselves embroiled in a similar debate.

The Ford Motor Co. has mobilized dozens of historians, lawyers, and researchers to fight a civil case brought by lawyers in Washington and New York who specialize in extracting large cash settlements from banks and insurance companies accused of defrauding Holocaust victims. Also, a book scheduled for publication next year will accuse General Motors Corp. of playing a key role in Hitler's invasions of Poland and the Soviet Union. *Washington Post*

Monet Water Lilies believed to be Nazi plunder

BOSTON (Reuters) — A Claude Monet waterlily painting on display at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts was "almost certainly" stolen in 1941 by Nazis from a French Jewish collector, the *Boston Globe* reported yesterday.

Jonathan Petropoulos, an expert on art stolen by Hitler's regime, told the newspaper that during World War II Monet's *Water Lilies* 1904 was part of a collection of art plundered for Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.

The painting, normally housed in a museum in Caen, France, was probably stolen from Paul Rosenberg, whose family plans to make a claim for the artwork, the *Globe* reported.

Syrians vote for new parliament

DAMASCUS (AP) — Millions of Syrians headed to polling stations yesterday to elect a new 250-seat Parliament from among 7,350 candidates. No results are expected before Thursday. The National Assembly, or parliament, has limited legislative power, with effective control held by President Hafez Assad. Two-thirds of the seats in the assembly are allotted to the National Progressive Front, a coalition of seven parties led by the Baath Party which has ruled Syria since 1963. The allotment of seats was the same in the previous four-year term which ended in September. The Baath gets 135 seats, and 32 go to allied parties. Independents run for the remaining 83 seats.

Tom Hanks: I regret supporting Clinton fund

NEW YORK (AP) — Tom Hanks says he regrets giving the Clinton legal defense fund \$10,000 in light of the president's admission that he had an inappropriate relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

"We gave ten thousand bucks very early on," Hanks said in an interview published in the December 7-14 issue of the *New Yorker* magazine.

"In all honesty, in the light of events since, it would be awfully hard to say now, 'Oh, here, let me help you out with this problem,'" Hanks said.

He added that "the other side has plenty of figures that pony up an awful lot of dough, too. So you try to fight fire with fire, or something."

Ex-con loses suit against TV host

WASHINGTON (AP) — A self-described former "hit man, high-paid gigolo, drug smuggler, and con artist" who says he was tricked into appearing on *The Geraldo Show* five years ago lost a Supreme Court appeal yesterday.

The court, without comment, refused to revive a lawsuit in which Sonny Gibson accused talk show host Geraldo Rivera, CBS Broadcasting, and others affiliated with the program of defrauding and defaming him. Gibson's turned-away appeal said he "was the victim of an increasingly frequent phenomenon on television talk shows called the 'ambush'."

Gibson has worked as a television and movie actor since his release from prison in 1980. The show actually focused on "casting couch abuses." Two women appeared as guests to accuse Gibson of claiming to be a producer and luring them into phony auditions where he made unwanted sexual advances.

Autopsy conducted on 7-kilo teenage girl

JANESVILLE, Wis. (AP) — An autopsy was conducted over the weekend on a teenage girl who weighed about seven kilos when she was dead on arrival at a hospital last week.

The girl's mother was charged Saturday with neglect leading to her death and was released on personal recognizance bond of \$10,000.

Public defender Guy Taylor, Karen Kuffer's attorney, described his client as a very poor woman who cared for her child, Kay, as best she could. He has rejected suggestions that Kuffer did not care for Kay, who suffered from cerebral palsy. "She spent the last 15 years of her life caring for an invalid."

Death row escapee still loose

By TERRI LANGFORD

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (AP) — For 35 years, living in the shadow of Texas' death row has never given A.L. Shepard a moment's worry. He's not even nervous about the escape of convicted killer Martin Gurule.

"Usually, when one gets out, they catch him," Shepard said Sunday as he watched guards at a roadblock near his mailbox.

Not this time. Gurule has evaded capture for more than three days after scaling two fences at the Ellis I Unit amid a hail of bullets.

Authorities continued to search snake-infested woods and creekbeds for Gurule, confident that he is still somewhere in the 17,000 swampy acres surrounding the prison 130km. north of Houston — and getting hungrier by the hour.

"These 72 hours don't faze us," said Glen Castlebury, spokesman for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. "For all we know he could be laying out there disabled. He could be dead."

Prison officials say Gurule and the six other death row inmates escaped late Thanksgiving evening from a recreation yard fence by cutting a fence with a hacksaw, which has yet to be recovered.

They waited for more than three hours atop the prison's flat-topped roof before making a run for the fences at about 12:15 a.m. Friday. As Gurule hit the second of the two fences circling the prison, a motion detector was set off and tower guards made out the moving bodies in heavy fog and began shooting. No one was hit. The shots stopped the other inmates before they reached the fences.

Gurule, 29, was sentenced to death for shooting Minnie "Mike" Piperis on October 12, 1992, during a robbery at a restaurant Piperis owned with his brother, George. Gurule also was charged with killing restaurant worker Anthony Staton, but that case never went to trial.

"Work capable" inmates — those who have earned extended recreation time privileges — are not under

direct guard supervision when in a recreation yard, prison spokesman Larry Fitzgerald said. However, a guard regularly passes by the recreation yard and another guard makes bed checks at the adjoining cell block every half hour.

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World AIDS Day

One hears less and less – at least in the Western world – of people dying of AIDS. Nearly 20 years since the first cases were diagnosed and dreaded as an acute, fatal disease, Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome has become a chronic illness that can persist for years and even decades – if the patient is provided with an expensive “cocktail” of protease inhibitors that suppress HIV’s multiplication in the body.

In the developing world, of course, where the majority of AIDS victims are dying, no government can afford to spend the many thousands of dollars it costs to supply each patient with these drugs. Millions of Third World children are condemned either to waste away and die from AIDS or to grow up as orphans, their parents dead from the untreated syndrome. Babies may be doomed even from the womb, unless their mothers are diagnosed as HIV carriers before delivery, in which case giving AZT or another protease inhibitor could greatly reduce the fetus’ risk of being infected.

In Israel during the past year, anti-AIDS activists scored a major victory – the “cocktail” of medications was included in the basket of health services that each health fund must provide its members. However, this regimen is not like taking an aspirin; it requires swallowing a few dozen pills a day, each at a stipulated time and in relation to meals. Many patients find this difficult to follow, and often unpleasant side effects compound the problem of non-compliance. In addition, the mutating AIDS virus is showing signs of becoming resistant to some of the drugs in the “cocktail.”

Health Minister Yehoshua Matza has gone on the record saying he will fight for the inclusion of future drug treatments for AIDS when they are developed, and this is to be welcomed. Another positive but belated development is increased educational efforts to prevent the spread of AIDS among immigrants from countries where the disease is endemic; just a few years ago, these were virtually nil.

The Israel AIDS Task Force has had a long-running press-release war with the ministry, claiming with apparent exaggeration that there are “some 10,000 HIV carriers,” compared with the 1,878 that is the official government figure. The IATF also argues that the amount of money the ministry allocates for education and blood testing – NIS 15 million – is woefully inadequate. Certainly, if compared with the level of

ministry funding for public-service announcements warning against smoking (zero shekels), this is indeed a lot of money. But compare the handful of AIDS deaths each year with the more than 5,000 Israelis who die annually from less dramatic, tobacco-related diseases. The anti-smoking lobby apparently doesn’t have as much influence and sympathy inside the ministry as the tobacco manufacturers and importers have in the Knesset.

Still, with the large numbers of foreign workers – both legal and illegal – in the country, the potential exists for a dramatic increase in HIV cases, including its spread to the general population via prostitutes and drug users. Foreign workers, even legal, get a bare minimum of health care, and most fear being tested for HIV in the belief this would result in a one-way ticket back home. This is why the initiative by the IATF and a new one by Hadassah-University Hospital to offer anonymous AIDS testing is welcome.

The Health Ministry is too conservative when it insists that blood tests should be provided only if the person agrees to show his or her identity card or passport. The aim should be to have a maximum of high-risk individuals go for testing – and if this means promising anonymity, it should be available.

With the legal requirement of “informed patient consent” before undergoing an HIV test, pregnant women are not automatically checked for the virus, even though a syphilis test is routinely performed. But more should be done to encourage all pregnant women at high risk for the virus to be tested – not just for themselves, but to identify those needing AZT so their baby’s infection during pregnancy and childbirth can be prevented.

A safe, effective vaccine to protect against HIV infection remains beyond the grasp of medical researchers, at least for the near future. Other promising approaches are being considered, according to a recent clinical review article in the *British Medical Journal*. These may include integrase inhibitors, as well as drugs that block the entry of HIV or disrupt the virus’s transcription. In the meantime, the best way to fight the spread of the disease is through AIDS education programs, modeled after the Jerusalem AIDS Project, particularly those aimed at young people via the schools and the media. They should be implemented year round, and not only today, when World AIDS Day rolls around.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MILLER'S MESSAGE

Sir, – There is no doubt that Jerusalem deputy mayor Haim Miller could have saved his case more elegantly than he did. It may be that he has a dislike for all immigrants. But neither his tone nor his prejudices (if any) should invalidate his message: That there are thousands of immigrants walking our streets, with a government-issued ID card in their pocket, proclaiming to all the world that they are Jewish, when in fact their level of Jewishness is on par with that of the pope.

Now, I can understand Absorption Minister Yuri Edelstein taking umbrage (or I could, if I were a

politician). He's looking at potential voters (they sure as heck aren't going to vote for Shas!) It's Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Lau's comments that I can't understand.

He too appears more worried about the tone than about the content. Does his “disgust” mean that everything is okay? That he is giving his imprimatur to the situation? That I can allow my son to marry any woman from the former Soviet Union without having to hire a private investigator to check if her mother was Jewish or not?

This is not about liking or disliking a particular nationality (or

even race, for that matter). And this is not something that can be swept under the rug because it may hurt someone's feelings.

It is much too important for that. It affects too many people, both religious and non, who care that when a person says he or she is Jewish, they are in fact (halachically) Jewish and not someone who may have had a Jewish grandfather.

This is what Lau, Edelstein, et al should be worrying about.

SOL SPIEGLER

Tel Aviv.

DON'T MOCK

Sir, – Your report and heading “Begin Foundation establishing mock parliament” (November 26) regarding our meeting with the speaker of the Knesset misrepresents the purpose of the “Junior Knesset” that we plan to incorporate in the Menachem Begin Heritage Center.

The word “mock” suggests something that will be humorous, ludicrous or ridiculous, with the object of deriding the Knesset.

Nothing is further from the truth. The “Junior Knesset” will be a central feature of the Menachem Begin Heritage Center. It will be the focal point of an educational pro-

gram involving the schools of Israel, whose senior classes will be trained in the art of speaking and listening, of debating and presenting ideas.

Menachem Begin is an excellent role model of fine parliamentary behavior and oratorical skill, as the speaker of the Knesset stated. The educational program is now being elaborated, and hopefully will be presented in conjunction with the Ministry of Education.

As in some other countries, there will be debating societies and debating competitions that will culminate in the “Junior Knesset.” The

young people will learn how to prepare a bill and guide it through the various readings to final presentation. This educational program will, we are sure, have the cooperation and support of members of the Knesset and former members of the Knesset of all parties.

There will be nothing “mock” about it.

HARRY ZVI HURWITZ
Executive Vice President,
Menachem Begin Heritage
Foundation.

Jerusalem.

HIJACKING IRONY

Sir, – No one seems to have noticed the irony of naming the new Gaza airport after the world's number one hijacker – Yasser Arafat. Remember Sabena, Entebbe, the three planes in Jordan, and so on, not to mention

a ship, several buses, the odd school, etc., all held hostage?

It is also worth noting that only blatant dictatorships name things for the Leader (Stalingrad, Hitler Youth, etc.). In democracies, we honor the memory of great people

from our past (Washington, Bnei Akiva and so on). This should serve as a timely reminder of just who and what we are negotiating with.

CYNTHIA FREEDMAN
Netanya.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On December 1, 1933, *The Palestine Post* celebrated its first anniversary. A reception was held for the directors, shareholders, friends and the staff at midnight in the new offices at the Hassolei Street building in Jerusalem. The *Post's* progress during the past year was reported to be satisfactory. The

newspaper was already served by a number of new correspondents in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus and Amman.

50 years ago: On December 1, 1948, *The Palestine Post* reported that on the 137th day of the second truce, Lt.-Col. Moshe Dayan, Israeli Commander in Jerusalem,

and Lt.-Col. Abdullah el Tel of the Arab Legion and the Military Commander of the Old City of Jerusalem, signed an agreement providing for a “complete and sincere” cease-fire and for the freedom of movement behind the lines in the Jerusalem area.

Alexander Zvielli

Unity won't work

YOSSI BEILIN

Many secular members of the peace camp cite two reasons for forming a national unity government: The first is that peace can only be achieved if both major parties join together in a coalition; and the second is that a national unity government is the only way to break the stranglehold of religious politics.

Neither claim can, in my view, be substantiated. Anyone who has

which had been created for reaching agreement with the Palestinians and Jordan was buried.

When Peres attempted to persuade the more moderate Likud ministers to support him, they explained that this was only possible when he (Peres) was prime minister, but that when the leader of their own party headed the government they could not vote

If Labor joins the government, it will ease the way to postponing implementation of Oslo

fond memories of the Peres-Shamir governments between 1984-1990 should recall the vast differences between the period in which Shimon Peres served as prime minister and Yitzhak Shamir's term of office.

Peres led his problematic, cumbersome government intelligently and skillfully to withdraw (albeit unfortunately, in my opinion, temporarily) from Lebanon; solve the problem of Taba, thus bringing about the return of the Egyptian ambassador; and adopt an economic program which saved us from financial disaster.

Few Likud ministers lent their support to Peres' positions. Shamir, who served as foreign minister and deputy prime minister, vigorously opposed all the prime minister's political proposals, but Peres achieved a majority and succeeded in realizing his own political agenda, much to Shamir's chagrin.

When, after 25 months, the situation was reversed, Peres attempted to continue to obtain a majority in support of his policies but failed miserably. His talks with King Hussein – of which Shamir was fully aware – led to an understanding termed the London agreement in April 1987. But Shamir opposed it, and the opportunity

against him.

The rest is history. The intifada broke out in December of that same year against the background of the total freeze in the political process. On July 31, 1988, King Hussein announced that he was relinquishing his claims to the West Bank, and in the elections which were held in November 1988 the electorate asked Peres why they should vote for him after he had put his trust in Shamir for two years.

AFTER these elections another national unity government was formed, “for the sake of peace.” In May, Peres and Yitzhak Rabin persuaded Shamir to adopt a political agenda, the main objective of which was to form a Palestinian delegation to be elected in the West Bank and Gaza, in order to conduct negotiations with Israel.

The attempt failed. When it became apparent that Shamir opposed implementation of the plan, the Labor Party left his government. Later, Rabin admitted that if we had not left the government in March 1990 we would never have won the 1992 elections.

We may therefore assume that progress toward peace can only be made in a national unity government if such a government is led

Don't mess with the Bank of Israel

EVELYN GORDON

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu must have had a powerful Yom Kippur experience this year. Within a month after the holiday, he had repudiated all his previous diplomatic principles in the Wye agreement; last week, he also repudiated all his economic beliefs.

Perhaps he simply smells elections in the air. But whether his economic conversion is genuine or not, it is bad news for the country.

Until last week, Netanyahu had been a staunch supporter of the Bank of Israel's independence in general, and of its conservative monetary policy in particular. And these policies had proven their worth: the inflation rate and the balance-of-payments deficit both dropped sharply, and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE) became a mecca for foreign investors.

It is a measure of the esteem in which the markets hold Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel that when he hiked interest rates by 4 percent in the space of two weeks last month, in an effort to stem the shekel's slide, it was not only the shekel that promptly regained strength: The stock market soared as well. Interest rate hikes are generally anathema to stock markets – but in the two weeks following Frenkel's second rate hike, the TASE gained 12%, in relief over the return of stability to the foreign exchange market.

Last Thursday, however, Netanyahu announced that he intends to intervene to lower interest rates. Not that he can do anything on this score directly: By law, Frenkel has exclusive authority over interest-rate decisions. But there are many ways for a prime minister to pressure even as notoriously stubborn a governor as Frenkel.

The unhappy short-term results of Netanyahu's decision to try to interfere in monetary policy are already evident: The shekel plunged 1% on Friday in response, and index-linked bonds rose sharply on Sunday in reaction to investors' fears of renewed inflation. Should Frenkel actually cave in and cut rates, the resultant shocks would be even worse.

Far more worrying, however, are the possible long-term consequences, particularly given that the Knesset is debating a private member's bill to reduce the central bank's independence.

The bill is sponsored by former finance minister MK Avraham Shohat (Labor), coalition chairman Meir Sheerit (Likud) and MK Avraham Poraz (Shinui), and appears to enjoy wide support among both coalition and opposition MKs. If the prime minister were to swing his support behind it as well, it would almost certainly pass and Israel would lose one of its most vital economic assets.

Without aid, there would be no Palestinian self-rule. Economic aid has allowed Palestinians to administer their own education and social welfare systems and provide day-to-day governmental services.

Now, donor countries must consider a long-term program that is sustainable, and encourage the Palestinians to move toward greater budgetary self-sufficiency. Foreign aid is a means for development and peacemaking, not an end in itself.

Donor countries initially assumed the Palestinians could count on steady commerce with Israel and a flood of investment from abroad, but terrorist attacks led to economically debilitating closures by Israel.

As the donor community meets to create a blueprint for the next five-year period, it must first anticipate the acute labor and social needs that arise from closure policies, and be sober in its expecta-

tions for large-scale foreign investment.

Second, “technical assistance” must be scaled back. Palestinian economist Adel Zagha demonstrated in a 1997 study that large amounts of donor aid have been wasted on unnecessary consulting services provided by donor countries.

Palestinian officials complain that they may receive several site studies for the same project, but not enough money to implement the project itself.

Third, more attention must be given to the Palestinian agricultural sector, the largest source of employment in the territories. Agricultural projects are often passed over for more high-profile water, micro-credit, tourism or democratization programs. Lastly, the Palestinian Authority should continue to receive some funds for recurrent expenses under the World Bank-administered Holst Fund.

THE Clinton Administration should appoint an “aid czar” to shepherd the US aid package through Congress. The State Department's Middle East peace team, led by Dennis Ross, is spread too thin and lacks a figure who can bring real clout to Capitol Hill.

THE strength and independence of

Dry Bones



by the leader of the peace camp.

When the government is headed by the Right, Labor can only help matters by providing a contingent security net and by suspending its efforts to topple the government as long as the government moves along the correct political path. This was the case at Camp David, this was the case when Shamir was forced to participate in the international Madrid Conference in 1991, and this has been the case following the Wye agreements.

Netanyahu is a sworn opponent of the Oslo process. Every step in the direction of realizing this process is taken reluctantly. If the Labor Party joins his government, it will ease the way to postponing implementation of the agreement. If it remains outside the government Netanyahu can be pressured into moving forward.

As to the religious parties, they will be a part of any national unity government. As long as the confrontation between the two major, secular Zionist parties continues, the Likud has no chance of winning without the support of the religious and haredi parties.

The only secular governments to date have been those of Yitzhak Rabin, from 1993 to the time of his assassination, and of Shimon Peres in 1995-1996.

Forming a government with Labor while pushing these parties away is tantamount to the Likud conceding the reins of government in the future.

Just as all governments of national unity in the past included the religious parties, so too in the future these parties will play a central role in any such government.

perhaps because, unlike most finance ministers, he is not an elected politician – but Shohat is a classic example. Thanks to his spendthrift budgetary policies, the balance-of-payments deficit ballooned to unprecedented heights during his tenure. Not content with that, he spent most of his term of office trying (unsuccessfully) to get Frenkel to cut interest rates, which would have made the problem even worse.

Thus under the Shohat-Sheetrit bill, there would at best be a strong minority for an easy money policy on the governing council; should the chosen academic also be an easy-money advocate, they would have an absolute majority. Israel would then have the dubious distinction of housing the only central bank in the world to make short-term growth, rather than long-term economic stability, its main priority.

The result would almost certainly be a return to the era of high inflation and huge balance-of-payments deficits. Foreign investment would dry up, and Israel would once again have the status of an economic pariah. In an increasingly global economy, this is hardly a recipe for long-term growth.

It is rare that the Knesset has a chance to make decisions with far-reaching consequences for the country's long-term economic health. It must be hoped that the MKs will rise to the occasion and reject any effort to limit the central bank's independence.

New carrots for peace

SB LASENSKY

ations for large-scale foreign investment.

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A White House-appointed aid coordinator, perhaps a former member of Congress, could blunt potential funding restrictions, build better ties with congressional leaders, and nurture a more constructive relationship with pro-Israel lobbies.

The administration should also reach out to American Jewish organizations that resolutely support the peace process. The White House must encourage Jewish groups to support aid to the Palestinians just as it has solicited support for aid to Egypt.

The US should, moreover, develop a more realistic aid structure. One-quarter of US assistance is earmarked for investment guarantees through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Due to the poor investment climate in the Palestinian areas, these funds – as well as hundreds of millions more offered by European countries – have gone untouched. Donor assistance must correspond to the capacity of the Palestinian economy.

Finally, Israel needs to be a stronger advocate for Palestinian aid because economic development strengthens the Palestinian peace camp. Israel is neither willing nor able to finance large-scale development projects.

Israel should not fear a zero-sum calculation; aid to the Palestinians has not led to any reductions in foreign aid to Israel. In fact, quite the opposite. At Wye, the US promised Israel an additional \$1 billion to cover West Bank redeployment expenses.

For the Palestinians, the Washington donor conference reflects PA Chairman Yasser Arafat's assiduous efforts to qualitatively improve US-Palestinian relations. As a result, he hopes, the US will substantially increase current aid levels. Arafat and his advisers should be careful with their words and deeds so as not to alienate the Clinton administration, the US public, or Congress.

Like the Camp David Accords, the Wye agreement provides positive economic incentives to both sides as long as they are willing to take substantial risks for peace. Again, aid has proven more effective than coercion.

But Israelis and Palestinians must remember that economics are only a handmaiden to the political process, and any future meltdown in Israeli-Palestinian relations will no doubt lead to fewer carrots from the US and the international community.

The writer served in New York as a public affairs officer for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1993-95).

Shaping the world for the blind

A Jerusalem company has produced a system that lets blind people 'feel' graphics on a computer screen, 'read' alphabetical text – and even play computer games. **Judy Siegel-Itzkovich reports**

A blind person's access to the visual world around him has been confined to information he can get from texts produced in Braille, audio tapes or computers that translate Braille into artificial-voice sentences sounded by computers.

But these give the visually impaired a very limited picture of their surroundings. With no spatial awareness, they can't appreciate a photograph or painting, or make out any graphic images.

That is, until now. Nearly 170 years after Louis Braille invented the tactile reading and writing system named for him, a Jerusalem start-up company called VirTouch Ltd. has accomplished what many have tried but failed to do. They have produced a complete hardware and software system allowing the blind to "feel" graphics on a computer screen, "read" any alphabetical text from a program or the Internet and even play computer games.

The impetus behind the invention came from Dr. Igor Karasin, the research and development manager of the two-year-old company, which received a \$250,000 grant from the Chief Scientist's Office of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and \$75,000 in venture capital from the Newton Group in Tel Aviv.

KARASIN, who was raised in

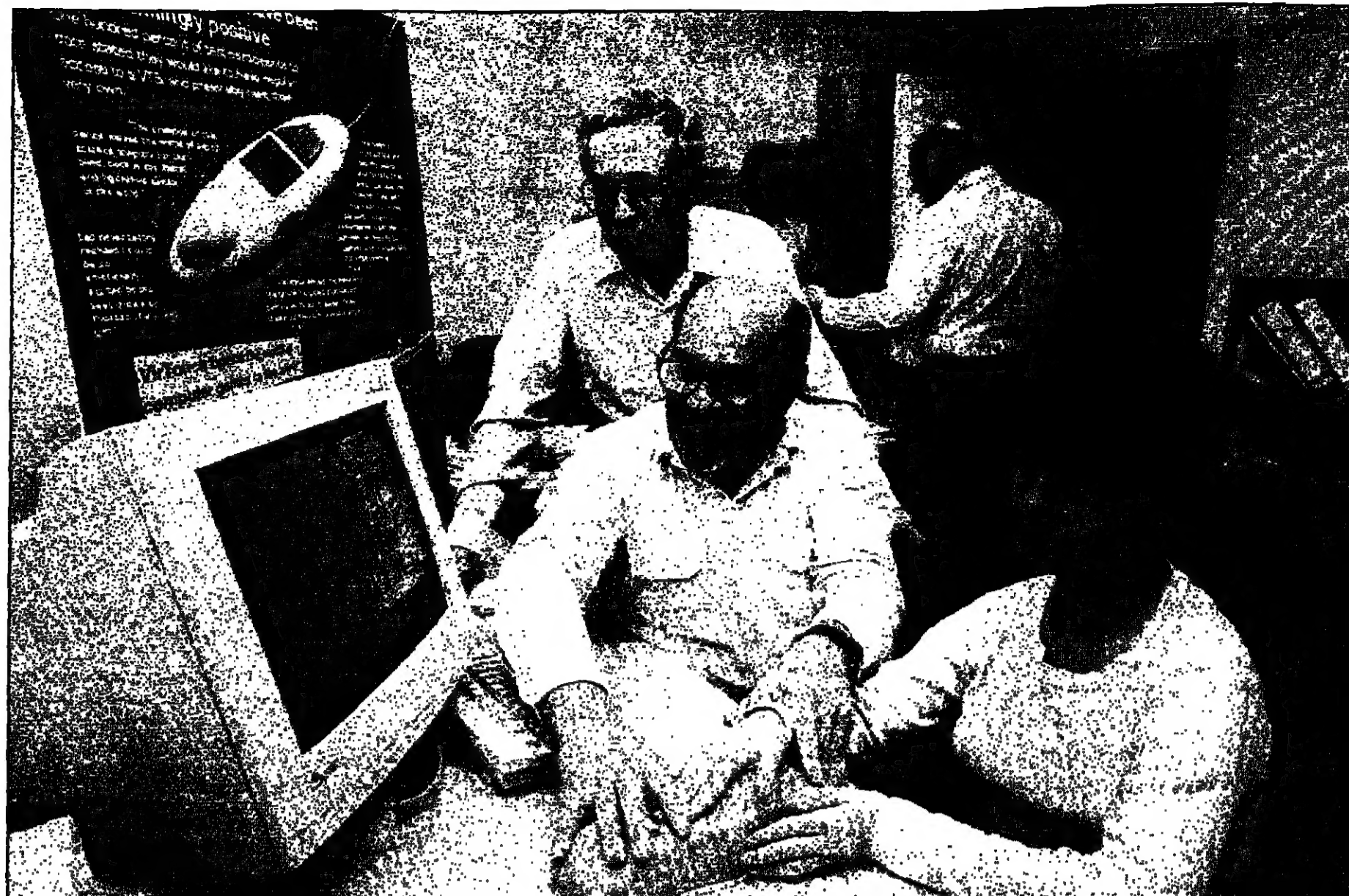
Leningrad but immigrated from Latvia, where he was a professor of computer sciences, was a founding partner in the enterprise. Located in the Jerusalem Software Incubator at the Har Hotzvim industrial park (which houses 16 other embryonic R&D ventures), VirTouch has now "hatched," becoming a fully fledged start-up company with four employees.

A non-technical staffer is public-relations director Art Braunstein, a Hebrew University graduate who took early retirement from the US Foreign Service two years ago after a career in Washington, Vietnam, Senegal, Niger, Mali, Egypt and Tunisia, and moved to Jerusalem with his family.

The staff will expand in the coming year when VirTouch perfects its working model and begins manufacturing hundreds of systems by the end of 1999.

The technology, called Virtual Touch System (VTS), is based on three finger displays atop an oversized mouse-like device. Each of three fingers (excluding the pinky and thumb) is exposed to 32 rounded pins, four-wide in eight vertical rows. There are also six buttons allowing direct interaction with the screen.

The first time a user (even a sighted one) places his fingers on the device and moves the cursor



Inventor Igor Karasin shows Tami Rimon how to use the Virtual Touch System while Art Braunstein looks on.

(Photos: Sarit Uziely)

over text or graphics, he is confused. Some of the plastic pins are raised to the maximum degree, while others are half out and the others can't be perceived.

But when he tries to pass over elementary figures, such as a diagonal line, and circle or a rectangle – soon graduating to a map of Israel, a football field or a Picasso line drawing – it all begins to make sense.

BLIND people who read Braille generally have extremely sensitive fingers, so they can make out the graphic images and the letters and numbers much more speedily than sighted people. Eventually, they can easily make out four shades – black, dark gray, light gray and white – by the height of the pins under their fingers.

Put the mouse over letters or numbers, and you can actually see them "embossed" – three at a time – on the finger displays.

Karasin says that after streamlining and adapting the special mouse for use by blind children and left-handed people, the developers will consider including other sensory features, such as degrees of temperature in the palm area to allow the blind to "see" colors that are "hot" (like red) or "cold" (like blue).

VTS technology, which was developed with feedback from a large number of visually impaired and blind people in Israel and abroad, will open up many new career possibilities to them, including electronics, computer science, drawing and the visual arts, says Karasin.

The system will initially be sold for \$4,000 to \$4,500; eventually, when the company is able to produce 40,000 of them annually, it expects the price to fall to \$3,000 per unit.

The potential customer base for the system is large. There are some 17 million certified blind people living in the West, about 15,000 of them in Israel (of these, some 2,000 children and teenagers). There are about 500 blind Israelis working in the computer industry, and Karasin expects their numbers to mushroom when they get his company's product.

The VTS hardware and software will replace or complement Braille translation machines depending on profession and lifestyle. The National Insurance Institute, which

THE technology can even let the blind "read" chemical and mathematical formulas with superscripts and subscripts, graphs and shapes – something that is impossible with conventional methods. "But, of course," Karasin adds, "the main market will be outside Israel, from the US to Japan."

Presenting VTS, for which the company has patents pending in Western countries, at the National Federation of the Blind Convention in Dallas last July, and again at the "Closing the Gap" exhibition in Minneapolis in October.

ongoing effort... to involve blind people in all aspects of the process. This genuine concern for the input of those who will actually use the product is... very rare indeed, thus deserving of the highest praise.

"The VirTouch interface has the potential to open up further areas of computing to blind people," says Gamliel. "I am very eagerly following the development of the product and awaiting the results with the greatest anticipation."

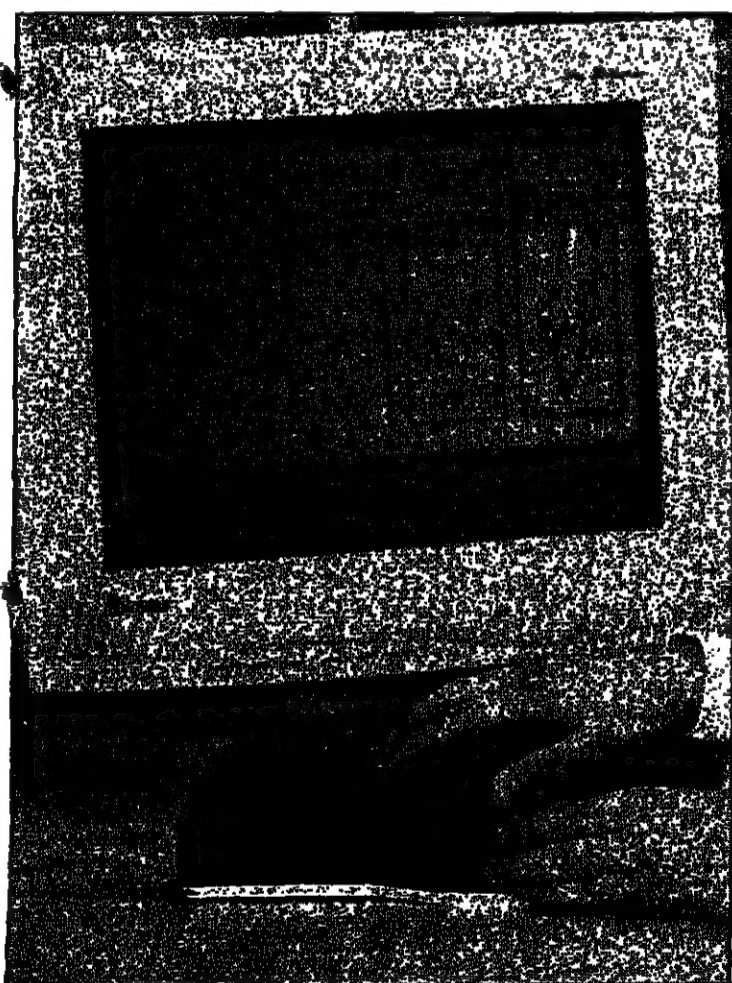
tional technologies at Tel Hai Teachers' College, was impressed by his recent visit to VirTouch. "The significance of being able to sense a shape on the screen and not just a text opens a window of hope for those whose cognitive fields have been limited to the linear. The addition of a graphic language has an entire significance in its own right."

"The blind will be able to absorb units of information that are more concentrated, more substantial and more accessible than the verbal information they have received until now," says Yaniv.

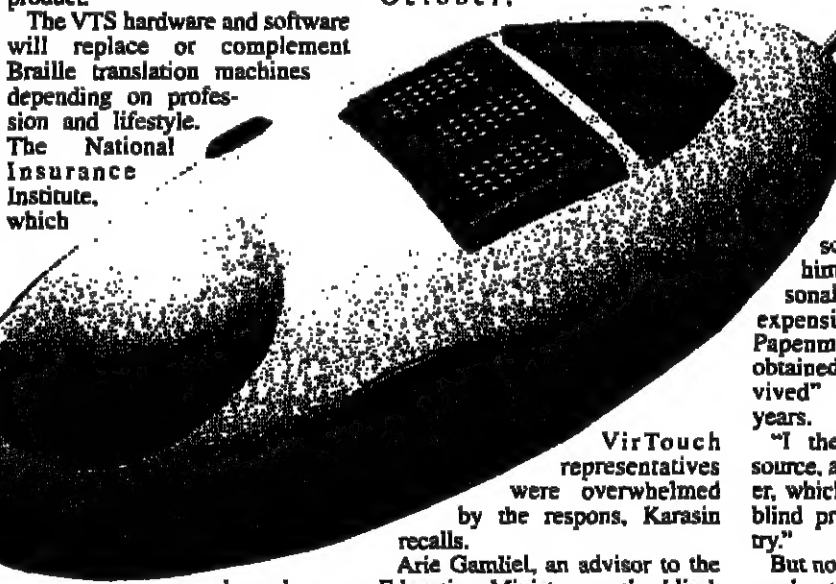
While VTS will enable the blind to use ordinary computer programs, including some entertainment software, the company has already developed some computer games meant specially for the blind: an arcade shooting game, for example. Training on them will improve their timing skills, notes Braunstein.

Although the blind have been the main focus of VirTouch's R&D, Karasin foresees the day when the technology will also be used by the sighted to improve their tactile abilities and intercept messages when their hands are busy doing something else.

"A VTS system could be adapted for use in science museums – for example, so people can pay more attention to what their fingers sense," says Karasin. "And pilots or drivers could have the pins press against the skin on their arm or their back to warn them of something without them having to take their hands off the controls."



The technology enables the blind to "see" maps, football fields or line drawings.



helps finance the purchase of equipment for the visually disabled, ought to regard the \$4,500 VTS as a good investment since it will enable them to get good, well-paying jobs, maintains the R&D manager.

VirTouch representatives were overwhelmed by the response, Karasin recalls.

Arie Gamliel, an advisor to the Education Ministry on the blind, who is visually impaired, says he is extremely excited by the VTS system.

"I use a computer extensively both on the job and at home. I am extremely impressed with the

SHMUEL Retbi, a 49-year-old blind computer programmer works for the Justice Ministry. He did fine until the mainframe computer – which was hooked up to an Optacon lens to make the text on the screen understandable to him – was replaced by a personal computer. A new, very expensive, device called a Papezner Braillelex 40 was obtained for him, and he "survived" another three or four years.

"I then got, from a private source, a DecTalk voice synthesizer, which placed me at the top of blind programming in the country."

But now, his office is bringing in work stations using the highly graphic Windows 95 operating system. VTS is Retbi's main hope for being able to continue in his profession.

Dr. Hanan Yaniv, the sector head for adaptation of informa-

book

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In the eye of the beholder

It's suddenly become crystal clear what our nation's most successful export has been over the course of this recession year.

Forget about silicon chips, semiconductors, Internet knowhow and all of that high-tech junk. What the world wants is Israeli babes.

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Just think about it: In a single calendar year, we've experienced a first-place triumph at the Eurovision contest, in which self-created female Dana International captured the top honors, then turned around and signed a big juicy contract with Sony Records, achieving her dream of becoming a real global diva. We've had Eden Harel reigning as MTV Europe's most popular video disc jockey.

Harel did her job so well that she was chosen to co-host the Miss World Contest. And then,

these various Eurodisco culture competitions are, it's more difficult to scoff at them when we come out on top.

There are always those who claim that such contests "are all politics," and the choice of Abargil was nothing but a reward for the Wye agreement. But anyone who witnessed the intellectual level of this event might seriously question if those who judge it actually follow Middle East politics. Besides, there were plenty of other politically correct choices — they could have crowned Miss Honduras, for example, in order to cheer up the country in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

Nope, it just must be something about that irresistible Israeli charm. Not to sound unpatriotic or anything — but it is pretty unclear to me exactly why Abargil was singled out. She looked as pretty as any curly-haired Israeli high-school student, but nothing special about her stood out. And in her post-victory interviews she hasn't exactly sparkled with personality, or a will to serve her constituency — the World —

Home Front



Allison Kaplan Sommer

After such a year, it would be hard to claim that the whole world hates us

unexpectedly, just as 1998 was coming to a close, who should it turn out that Harel ends up helping to crown as Miss World but a 19-year-old from Netanya, Linor Abargil.

Among the 85 contestants for Miss World, there were a lot from tiny spots on the globe like Gibraltar, and the contest was not broadcast live, but tightly edited, with so many quick camera cuts that it was hard to get a look at any of the contestants for more than 30 seconds.

There was much ballyhoo about how "frunch more 'natural' and 'modern' this year's Miss World contest was supposed to be: the organization eliminated the controversial traditional beauty-contest ritual of having the girls strutting across the stage in bathing suits and high heels for the judges to ogle.

But no one who viewed the contest on TV suffered for lack of exposure to female flesh: The extended scenes of exuberant contestants bouncily playing volleyball and badminton in bikinis on the beach more than compensated for the lack of skin on stage.

It was true that Eden Harel didn't exactly have a starring role in the proceedings, despite her "co-host" title, but was relegated mostly to the position of backstage interviewer — a job which culminated in cheerleading for the 10 finalists as they headed from backstage into the spotlight.

But after such a year it would be hard for us to claim that the whole world hates us. And, tacky as

either. Her reaction to obtaining international recognition and a \$100,000 bonus check has been a rather tedious homesick whine: "I wanna go back to Netanya."

While her local loyalty must warm the heart of newly elected mayor Miriam Fireburg, the other Netanya woman currently basking in the glory of success, it isn't exactly inspiring. In the days that have passed since Abargil won her crown, all we have really learned about this young lady is how much she misses her boyfriend and her mom (both of whom somehow missed their flight to the Seychelle Islands to witness her victory) and that she really, really liked her roommate from Canada.

Not that we expect her to spout volumes on international peace and coexistence, but she could do a bit better. One hopes that she will take her cue from Dana and Eden, and make the most out of her short time in the spotlight. There will be plenty of time later to experience the thrills of hanging out with her boyfriend, serving in the army, studying journalism and communications, and eventually having babies as gorgeous as she is.

Right now, it's time for her to suffer through a year of jets, limos, five-star hotels in exotic international capitals and high-paying modeling assignments.

It's a rough job, Linor, but somebody's got to do it. It's all for the good of the country.



Last Wednesday, the 'New York Post' reported that Chelsea Clinton (left) and her boyfriend, Matthew Pierce, had split up.

She's fair game now

With the tabloids breaking the privacy pact concerning Chelsea Clinton, her life and loves are down in black and white for everyone to read. Howard Kurtz reports

For six years the press followed an unspoken pact to avoid coverage of Chelsea Clinton, allowing the president's daughter to grow up outside the harsh glare of journalistic scrutiny.

That wall of silence was shattered last week when the *New York Post* ran a screaming headline — "CHELSEA'S HEARTACHE" — saying she had broken up with her boyfriend at Stanford and visited the campus medical center for stress-related symptoms. Days earlier, the *National Enquirer* and the *Star* carried expose-style cover pieces on the 18-year-old sophomore.

"The mainstream press has been very respectful of the president and first lady's desire for privacy concerning their family and daughter," said White House spokesman Joe Lockhart. "The journalistic standards of some of the tabloids speak for themselves."

"What about the *New York Post*, where story — based on a 'source' and 'friend,' both unnamed — was quickly picked up by The Associated Press and various radio stations?" "I wouldn't consider the *New York Post* part of the media," Lockhart said. "The only difference between the *New York Post* and the supermarket tabloids is the supermarket tabloids have color pictures."

New York Post Editor Ken Chandler said Chelsea "deserves privacy up to a point," but "I don't see that this story was an invasion of privacy at all. She happens to be the daughter of the president."

The larger question is whether the children of celebrities should be just another juicy morsel for a voracious press. Some politicians, of course, thrust their kids into the spotlight. Vice President Al Gore, for example, spoke movingly at the 1992 Democratic convention about his young son's car accident.

But the first family has always been especially protective of the girl who was born during Bill Clinton's first term as governor of Arkansas. Until they posed for a *People* spread in 1992, many Americans were unaware the couple had a daughter. The president wouldn't allow cameras when he spoke at Chelsea's high school graduation. She has been photographed on foreign trips with her mother, but most people have never

When Chelsea was used to show the family was still intact, she became 'part of the White House publicity machine'

— *'Enquirer' editor Steve Coz*

heard her voice. The supermarket tabs zoomed in on the first daughter last week. The *National Enquirer* and the *Star* quoted a "campus pal," a "well-placed source" and an "insider" on how Chelsea is coping with the Monica Lewinsky affair. The *Enquirer* said she had a screaming match with her father and that her health is suffering. The *Star* said she's convinced her parents will split up after they leave the White House.

Enquirer Editor Steve Coz says he dropped his hands-off policy toward Chelsea when she adopted a high profile on Martha's Vineyard after President Clinton's August 17 confession. "She was the one shaking hands with everyone in the

crowd," Coz said. "She was the one to demonstrate the family was still intact. They used her for publicity, basically. At that point, Chelsea crosses a line. She becomes part of the White House publicity machine."

Besides, he said, "at some point you stop being a kid." *Star* Editor Phil Bunton offered a similar rationale: "She's getting more mature. She's inevitably been dragged into a peacemaking role between her mother and father and the fallout from the whole Monica thing. We felt, within some boundaries, it was all right to investigate her."

TOM Rosenstiel, director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism, said the free-wheeling media culture "has agreed on one element of Washington coverage: that Chelsea was off-limits. Now the tabloids, as their readers are stolen by an increasingly sensationalist mainstream press, have decided they can distinguish themselves by breaching perhaps the last protected area of common decency."

Chelsea Clinton, he said, "didn't run for anything. She is an innocent here. What happens to her is not a matter of consequence to the state or the public. This is purely a matter of gossip."

Hillary Rodham Clinton's office has consistently refused to comment on Chelsea's activities.

"Chelsea is just trying to be an average kid going to college, and it's difficult to do that," said Marsha Berry, the first lady's spokeswoman.

Chelsea has popped up in the news before. The *San Jose Mercury News* reported last May that she had been hospitalized for stomach pains. Just about everyone recorded for posterity her relationship with Stanford swimmer Matthew Pierce. And there were reports — inaccurate — that she planned to drop out of college after her father's confession regarding Lewinsky. (The Washington Post)



Ben-Gurion honors conferred in New York: Henry Kissinger (left), with Arishay Braverman and Barbara Walters.

Many women who rise high on the professional ladder forget about other women's rights. A noted exception, observed Prima Herzog, president of the International Council of Women, is Rosario G. Manalo, undersecretary for international economic relations in the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines. Herzog last week hosted a breakfast for Manalo, who was in Israel on a working visit with Virginia San, deputy administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. Also invited to the breakfast were Rosalinda de Perio-Santos, dean of the diplomatic corps and Philippines ambassador, Supreme Court Justice Doris Belmont, and Naomi Litman, the Prime Minister's Adviser on the Status of Women. All five women are lawyers by training. Manalo and San were university students together at a time when it was rare for Filipino women to attend university. Manalo, who has done much to advance the status of women in her own country and through the UN Commission on the Status of Women, is one of three candidates for the director-generalship of UNESCO. She urged Israel to become more visible in South East Asia. With the turnaround of the economic crisis, she said, there will be a lot of vibrant economic activity there. There are already signs of this, she added, citing "a strong surge from China." The economic growth and the potential exist, she noted, and urged Israel to "exploit that now."

"THE law requiring civil servants to retire at 65 is wrong; I know many 30-year-olds who should go home," declared octogenarian Dr. Ze'ev Hines, who was for many years chairman of the Israel Dental Association. Hines, who dug his teeth into the incompetent, was speaking at a farewell party for the very competent Dr. Moshe Kelman, outgoing director of the Health Ministry's dental health branch. Kelman, originally from London, came here as a young dentist, and was hired by then health minister Victor Shemtov, who also attended the farewell in Jerusalem. Shemtov noted that in the early '70s, he was very worried about the influx of many hundreds of "dental practitioners" from the then-Soviet Union who called themselves dentists, but whose standard of training fell well below that in Israel. While reluctant to see them unemployed, he didn't want to lower Israel's professional levels. One meeting with the energetic Dr. Kelman, he said, was enough to persuade him that this was the person to handle the problem. Kelman launched an intensive program of retraining for the immigrant practitioners, who eventually were licensed as dentists. After 28 years in the job, Kelman still has his first 1,100 first salary slip. "People thought I was crazy to go into the public service, but it's been fun," he said, handing over the reins to his second-in-command, Dr. Shlomo Sussman. Kelman will not fade into oblivion. He will continue as an adviser to the ministry and will chair the disciplinary committee for dentists.

CZECHS and balances: Guests who keep Middle East mean time missed out on the speeches at the CSA Czech Airlines 75th anniversary bash at the Dan Hotel. Jiri Prusa, CSA's executive vice president for marketing, insisted on having the speeches within half an hour of the start of the festivities, while Czech Ambassador Jiri Schneider and Ludek Hladis, CSA's manager for Israel, vainly tried to persuade him that it was not a good idea because Israelis are notorious for coming late. Prusa recalled that CSA flew to this country from 1947 to 1949, then suspended operations for another 40 years. Guests included Francie Oberlander, who in 1947 was CSA's section manager and helped to train the fledgling El Al's ground staff.

FORMER foreign minister Abba Eban, who was engaged in diplomatic missions on behalf of Israel even before the state was officially declared, was one of the speakers at this week's 50th anniversary celebrations of Israeli diplomacy. Eban, whose oratory is as spell-binding as ever, is about to release a series of audiocassettes containing his principal speeches at the United Nations with a commentary by veteran television star Walter

Cronkite. He recently fulfilled a similar function for Senator John Glenn, when the famous astronaut again took flight.

A FELLOW former diplomat and one of Eban's good friends, Dr. Henry Kissinger, who as US secretary of state played a rather meaningful role in paving the road to peace in the Middle East, was last week awarded an honorary doctorate by Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Since Kissinger was unable to fly to Israel because he was sitting shiva for his mother, a delegation of the university's board of governors, headed by its chairman, Lord George Weidenfeld, and BGU president Arishay Braverman flew to New York. They made the presentation at a gala dinner for 350 people at the Pierre Hotel, two days after Kissinger got up from his mourning. Amongst the guests were media magnate Conrad Black, banker Leonard Harlan and his wife, Fleur (the former Mrs. Benjamin Netanyahu), media personalities Barbara Walters and Abe Rosenthal, and Simcha Dinitz, former Israeli ambassador to the US.

GUR hassidim from around the world have been flocking to Jerusalem this past week for the wedding today of 19-year-old Israel Menachem Alter, son of the Gur Rebbe, and Esther Elger, 17, granddaughter of the Rebbe of Lublin. The wedding would be a grand celebration under any circumstances, but is even more so since this is the first time in half a century that the son of the head of the Gur dynasty is being married while his father is in office.

ANOTHER hassidic group — Habad — is none too happy with one of its chief benefactors, Rabbi Joseph Gutnick, the Australian gold tycoon who came to Israel last week at the invitation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Gutnick, who was instrumental in getting Netanyahu elected, expressed disappointment after it became obvious that Netanyahu would agree to cede territory in Judea and Samaria, incurring the displeasure of some of his fellow Habadniks who don't want their movement to become politically tainted. Advertising in the Hebrew media, a group of influential Habad rabbis have publicly distanced themselves from Gutnick, claiming that he does not speak for Habad, nor is he an emissary of the late Lubavitcher rebbe, Gutnick, who says his actions have been guided by counsel he received from the rebbe, has spent tens of millions of dollars on Habad community projects in Israel and abroad. The question is: Will the well dry up if Habad continues to treat him this way? Or alternatively, will he again become the golden-eyed boy when they need a generous donor for a very expensive project?

IT WAS almost too perfect that in Israel's 50th anniversary year, Linor Abargil would win the Miss World contest. Somewhat closer to home, there was another, possibly more meaningful beauty contest, in which Haifa grandmother Lottie Ashkenazi, a 64-year-old architect and interior decorator, won the locally run Ms. Golden Age competition. In addition to her title and a floral bouquet, the glamorous gran is getting a trip around the world.

RIGHT-wing activist Yael Amishav-Medved, who ran unsuccessfully in the last Knesset elections, is advocating that Israel change its strategic alliance to China and escape the "boa-constrictor embrace" of the US. Amishav-Medved even proposes encouraging immigration from China on condition that potential immigrants first undergo a halachic conversion. So what would be so attractive about Judaism and Israel to the Chinese? Unlike China, where families are limited to only one child, points out Amishav-Medved, one of the basic tenets of Judaism is to increase and multiply — something which even Israel's secularists do not discourage. A Chinese population explosion in Israel, she believes, would provide an added deterrent to acts of aggression by any of Israel's neighboring countries. And who knows, the Chinese may also have a link with the lost tribes. So many other ethnic groups are making that claim, why not the Chinese?

The gift that vanished

Dear Ruthie,
On Pesach my brother and his wife came over to my house for the Seder. Before the meal started, my brother told me in private that he would like to give a large monetary gift to each of my children. He wound up giving my two oldest children (aged 25 and 27) a sum of money.

My youngest, who is 20 and a college student, was not given anything since we thought that because of his age he would spend the money rather than invest it for future use. It was decided that he would get the cash on his 25th birthday.

Since he was not at the Seder, a letter was sent to his college dorm in Israel telling him of the gift. My son responded by sending his aunt and uncle a postcard from Israel, which did not include a thank-you.

Last week my brother came over to the house and told my wife and me that he was withdrawing the gift he had promised my son. His reason, he said, was that my son's failure to send a thank-you note indicated that he was being ungrateful.

I think my brother is an "Indian giver." I explained to him, in a letter, that had my son received an actual check — rather than a promise of a monetary gift five years hence — he would have thanked his uncle in writing.

What can my son do now? He is coming home next week, and still does not know his uncle is withdrawing the gift.
Fretting Father
Somewhere in the US

Dear FF:
From what you describe, it sounds as though you spend a lot of time taking responsibility for others. In this case, for example, not only did you make a decision to withhold the gift from your son, but did so on the grounds that he would waste rather than save it. It was this inclination to protect your son from himself — while protecting the money from him — that may

have started the problem in the first place. Perhaps just allowing your brother to give the gift would have been better. Afterwards, you could have talked to your son about the best way to save his money.

Now, it seems, you are taking responsibility for whether your son should or should not have said thank-you to his uncle, and in what way. You are also taking responsibility for your brother's withdrawing the gift, as well as for your son's reaction to that. This is something worth contemplating for the future.

While your problem seems to be carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders, your brother sounds like someone who needs to control his environment in another way — through controlled generosity. This could be the reason he presented the large gift to your children by taking you aside and letting you in on it first. It might also account for the way he has reacted: feeling that insufficient gratitude was paid him by your son.

With all these behind-the-scenes family dynamics, is it any wonder the gesture went sour? Your brother's behavior is not something you can change at this stage; nor can you turn back the clock and undo the fact that your son failed to respond to the promised gift in the way his uncle/benefactor would have liked. The matter is now between the two of them.

If your son talks to his uncle and explains his side, perhaps the whole thing will get settled without your intervention. If not, you may have no choice but to leave things as they stand. And your brother may risk your anger for his putting you in an uncomfortable position with regard to your children.

Keep in mind that if your son is old enough to attend college overseas, he is old enough to take responsibility for his manners.

Letters should be addressed to: 'Dear Ruthie,' POB 81, Jerusalem 91000. For e-mail: ruthie@jpost.co.il ('Dear Ruthie' also appears in *In Jerusalem* and in *City Lights* on Fridays.)

Dear Ruthie



Ruthie Blum

book department

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סדרה מן הארץ

Space cowboy sings the blues

In Tune



By David Brinn

When American rocker Steve Miller sang about the "Space Cowboy" all those years ago, he may have been referring to himself, but the punier must refer these days to

MUTATIONS

(Red Artz)

LADIES & GENTLEMEN THE BEST OF GEORGE MICHAEL

(NMC)

LOVE STORIES

(Belicon)

ROSELAND NYC LIVE

(Hilicon)

Beck (pictured right). One of the true original thinkers of 1990s rock, Beck continues to surprise and delight.

After spending most of the decade injecting hip-hop smarts and frenzied R&B sampling into his cut-and-paste, post-modern sound, Beck does away with the garnishes and presents organic space-age folk and country on *Mutations*.

Laid-back and magical, *Mutations* utilizes traditional rock instruments, centering on acoustic guitar and harmonica. Beck, with his touring band, crafts real "According to Hoyle" songs drenched in melancholy, melody and the blues and folk roots he's previously hinted at but only skirted around.

Beck sings here without any of the electronic vocal phrasings that were prevalent on his breakfast breakthroughs *Mellow Gold* and *Odelay*, and the surprise is how affecting his old-school voice can be.

"Which is not to imitate, for a second, that he's morphing into the next James Taylor. Beck's sense of irony and adventure is too strong to enable him to go totally straight, as the occasional added effects like sitars, synthesizers and subversive chord structures and time changes demonstrate.

Most closely resembling his 1994 indie acoustic-blues busman's holiday, *One Foot In The Grave*, *Mutations* is evidently a

side trip, meant to satisfy Beck's prodigious musical appetite while he records the official follow-up to *Odelay*. But if he ever decides to sell his sampling machine, it's clear that Beck's raw talent alone is more than enough.

WHETHER tackling upbeat dance music or slow ballads, George Michael has proven himself to be a convincing pop craftsman. While never totally overcoming his image as a musical lightweight from his years with Wham, Michael has produced occasional pop standards and has been one of the few white pop stars who regularly appear on the black charts, a testimony to his blue-eyed soul authenticity.

So why is *Ladies & Gentlemen - The Best Of* such a disjointed, unsatisfying affair? Basically because it's just too much for an artist like Michael. Standout ballads like "Careless Whisper" and funk-driven vehicles like "Freedom 90" showcase Michael's formidable talents. But aside from a couple of other originals, the highlights are the covers - "Somebody To Love" performed with Queen, "Papa Was A Rolling Stone" and "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me."

And the most impressive of the three new tracks included is a duet with Mary J. Blige on Steve Wonder's "As."

A single disc would have consolidated the peaks more efficiently and eliminated the need to search out the best of George Michael.

USUALLY, anything with Abba's name on it is enough to win me over.

Blatantly commercial, superficial and feathery light, Abba knew it and reveled in its Eurovision glitziness. But more importantly, the group knew how to create a catchy pop hook and their multitude of hit singles still turn up on the airwaves and still sound great (how often can you say that about a Partridge Family song?).

But *Love Stories* focuses on the less bouncy, and therefore less captivating material of the Abba years.

Perennials like "Fernando," "The Name of the Game" and "Chiquitita" still tantalize the taste buds of the ears, but the rest of the 17 songs are for the most part lackluster sludges and deserve to remain in the 1970s

'Nothing' is uplifting at Curtain Up

DANCE ROUNDUP

The *Dance of Nothing* emerges as the highlight of *Curtain Up/International Exposure* events (November 12 to December 13) and is a significant

CURTAIN UP/ INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE

Suzanne Delfal

milestone in Liat Dror and Nir Ben Gal's work. For the first time since *Two-Room Apartment* (1987), the couple produced a full evening work that did not resort to powerful head-on encounters between the sexes.

During the dance the audience is invited to sit in an improvised tent while the dancers perform on a carpeted floor.

Rounded, soft movements of the pelvic area are countered by a whipping of the upper body in circular motions. Phrases are repeated through the evening but are kept from becoming mundane by changing rhythms and different contexts.

At times, the dancers knead dough on stage - the movement giving way to the smell of baking cookies which are handed out by dancers to the audience at the end of the show.

The Dance of Nothing is a spiritual trip of loving and giving that is backed by mesmerizing music.

It is composed and performed by Gilles Andrieux, Yuval Miceinmacher and Haroun Teboul. Reflecting warmth and generosity, the dance shows that "nothing" can be an uplifting and

fulfilling experience.

THE Batsheva Ensemble's program stands out among *Curtain Up* events. At least three out of the five events were worthwhile - created by Israeli choreographers not much older than the young group's dancers.

Sini Yadech ("Put your hand") by Niv Scheinfeld places the dancer, formerly of the Liat Dror & Nir Ben Gal Company, as an up-and-coming name on the dance scene. The short work employs captivating body language to create a subtle encounter between a female dancer and a group of male dancers.

Barak Marshall's piece relies heavily on his unique movement phrasing. He cleverly recycles his own materials and his latest version of *Shoshana's Balcony* for the ensemble and gives it a new twist with the added dance-dialect for two, rendered by Yaron Barami and Tsahi Dahan.

The new kid on the block is Rami Levy, a dancer with Culberg Ballet (Sweden) and Nacho Duato's company (Spain), who recently decided to come back and join Batsheva. His debut as a choreographer with *Purs pro Toto*, set to music by Antonio Vivaldi, proves him a mature and accomplished artist, more serious and perhaps what more conservative than his peers. His well-structured work proceeds smoothly from group scenes to intimate and compassionate moments and forms a penetrating and smart picture.

The lighting design by the talented Bambi helps shift and redefine the dancers' space, an element that plays a major part in their interaction. *Purs pro Toto* makes Levy a worthy candidate for this year's *Curtain Up* events discovery title.

A Kiss through 3-D glasses

By ROGER CATLIN

By the time the smoke cleared and all the theatrical blood was mopped up, Kiss grossed \$150 million on its best-selling 1996-97 comeback tour.

"They even put us on the cover of *Forbes*, which is one magazine I thought I'd never be on the front of," says Paul Stanley, the guitarist and singer who paints a star over his eye in Kiss makeup.

The next step was going straight to the studio, where Stanley, 49; bassist Gene Simmons, 49; guitarist Ace Frehley, 47; and drummer Peter Dinklage, 50, recorded their first album together in 20 years.

And the tour that accompanies the *Psycho Circus* album necessarily has to be bigger than the last one.

"Certainly last time around, nobody was disappointed by what

they saw," Stanley said. "But this time we're incorporating 3-D technology into the show."

The band members, of course, have always operated in such dimensions. But for this tour, he says, "We have massive screens, including a 22-by-40-foot screen behind us, and at key points in the show, the audience puts on their 3-D glasses."

The effect? "I gotta say, by all appearances, if we got closer to you, we'd get arrested," Stanley says.

It's all part of upping the ante at a Kiss show, something that was a problem even on the comeback tour.

"The thing about Kiss is that we live in the shadow of the past," Stanley says. "The only band we compete with is Kiss. When we came back after 17 years apart, not

only did we have to live up to what we did in the past, we had to live up to people's fantasies of what we did."

Kids wowed by '70s Kiss concerts "remember massive lighting systems that in all honesty didn't exist," Stanley says. "We had a massive lighting system compared to everyone else at the time, but five guys with colored flashlights is not state of the art."

Stunts for the current show include Simmons flying up to a lighting truss, Frehley shooting rockets from his guitar, and Stanley flying out to the mid-arena. As well as, Stanley notes, "enough pyro to cause structural damage." But the biggest difference from the last tour will be the new songs that sound like they were written with arenas in mind.

(The Hartford Courant)

J.C. Bach and 'Beyond...'

By Ury Eppstein



Concert Review

The performance of Mark Kopytman's *Beyond...* was the local premiere of the work, which was commissioned by the Israel Camerata.

Jerusalem for a recent North American tour celebrating Israel's 50th anniversary. It was part of Subscription Concert No. 2, conducted by Avner Birn, which was otherwise divided neatly between rondo, classic and the 20th century: Johann Christian Bach, Mozart and Shostakovich.

Disconnected as the many contrasting short episodes of

ISRAEL CAMERATA
Works by J.C. Bach, Mozart,
Shostakovich, Kopytman
Jerusalem Theater
November 19

Kopytman's *Beyond...* might seem to be, they nevertheless had an apparent common denominator - agitation, restlessness, and a sometimes relentlessly repetitive intensity, at least until close to the work's end.

The concluding calm conveyed resignation, more than peace of mind, although with a veiled undertone of guarded optimism. Before that there prevailed a succession of somber emotions - menace, fear, despair, horror, flight - expressed disturbingly but in an artistically stylized yet highly communicative manner using many of the means that contemporary music has to offer.

Pianist Alexander Korsantiya released tremendous, electrifying energies with breathtaking virtuosity in the fast movement of Shostakovich's *Concerto for Piano and Trumpet*. His touch was incisive and forceful, yet delicately soft in the work's lyrical passages. He obviously felt at home with this work.

His approach to Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27, on the other hand, was as if from a respectful distance. Brilliantly polished technique was displayed to perfection, making the performance sometimes border on the mechanical. Some more elasticity, emotional warmth, or relaxed elegance might have added a more human touch.

Robert Vanyne's trumpet in the Shostakovich work produced glorious fanfares and songful melodiousness, reveling also in the work's biting irony.

NEWS

of the muse

Disney sequels roll into town

Disney Studios is capitalizing on its animated features with three sequels to its most popular recent films, all released only on video.

The first of the three to arrive here - the others are already available in North America - is *Beauty and the Beast II*, *The Enchanted Christmas*, which features the most engaging characters from *Beauty and the Beast*.

Still to come are *Pocahontas II: Journey to a New World* and *Lion King II: Simba's Pride*. Disney has already released several sequels to its big-screen hits on video, despite the fact that the sequels tend to be less gripping than the original film.

Shafira Zakai is, as usual, responsible for the first-rate translation of all three sequels into Hebrew and for casting and directing the Hebrew voice versions, which feature Alon Ofri, Ohad Shahar, Dani Litani, Rinat Gabai, Yuval Zamir and local Disney stage and screen veterans such as Sassi Keshet and Eli Gornstein. Michael Aizenstadt

Food for thought at Geshet

Ya'akov Shabtai's play, 'Ochlim' ('Eating'), is the Geshet Theater's next main-stage production. It stars Amnon Wolf as Ahab, Yevgenia Dodina (seen above in the new, award-winning local movie 'Palestine Circus') as Jezebel, and Yevgeny Gamburg as Naboth, murdered by Ahab murders for his vineyard. You can read all about it in Kings, Chapter 21. The play, reconstructed by Yevgeny Arye "to search for a path to ourselves today," uses the story to discuss the essence, the abuses and the limitations of arbitrary power. The play was first produced at the Khan exactly 20 years ago, and Shabtai wrote it while completing his monumental 'Fast Continuous,' which London's 'The Daily Telegraph' named the novel of the decade in 1989. 'Ochlim' will open December 28, hopefully at the Noga Cinema which has been named Geshet's new home. Helen Kaye

Jackson to give son British education

American singer Michael Jackson is planning a British private-school education for his 21-month-old son, Prince. He wants to send the boy to Stowe, whose alumni include Richard Branson.

Jackson, 40, sent a member of his management team to look over the school in Buckinghamshire, northwest of London, and to make inquiries about putting Prince on its early entry list. His interest in Stowe follows Madonna's inquiries about a place for her two-year-old daughter, Lourdes, at Cheltenham Ladies' College.

"Michael has an English friend who speaks very highly of Stowe," says one of Jackson's music business colleagues. The singer's emissary says that the £14,940-a-year school meets all Jackson's requirements, not least that it is set in a secure environment. Should Prince display any musical talents, he could take part in the school's weekly recitals.

There is no doubt such a wealthy parent would be welcomed at a time when Stowe is conducting a £20 million restoration appeal.

The Sunday Telegraph

Comedian Flip Wilson dies of liver cancer

Flip Wilson, who made US TV history by becoming the first black comedian to successfully host his own variety series, died on Wednesday of liver cancer at age 64, his family said.

The New Jersey-born Wilson was host of the *The Flip Wilson Show* on NBC from 1970 to 1974. He was best known for his impressions of the Reverend Leroy of the Church of What's Happening Now and as the drag act Geraldine, whose catchphrase was "The Devil made me do it."

Reuters

New music that's 300 years old

By MICHAEL AIZENSTADT

When Eduardo Lopez Banzo was in his last year of studies with harpsichordist Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam, he knew very well that he would like to continue and play baroque music as an independent professional musician.

But he also knew that he did not want to be just another guy playing the same music as everyone else.

"I knew that there was a lot of music played in the monasteries and cathedrals of my homeland and I wanted to play that music in particular, music which was relatively unknown."

And so Banzo created the vocal-instrumental ensemble Al Ayre Español, "which is a very specific Spanish idiom hard to translate. It means something like 'in the Spanish way,'" he says, in a phone interview from his Spanish home a week before Al Ayre Español makes its Israeli debut, in concerts Thursday and Saturday.

Most of the musicians in the decade-old ensemble, whose six discs showcase their unique repertoire, are Spanish.

"The ensemble is a sort of a replica of the musical ensembles that operated in Spain three and four hundred years ago. Traditionally, the string players in the royal chapel in Madrid were Italian and the wind players usually came from the Netherlands and from France, while the Spaniards were the singers and played several other instruments. This ensemble has its roots also in my schooldays so we, too, have several Dutch musicians."

Al Ayre Español performs, above all, Spanish baroque music, most of which is totally unknown.

"As a matter of fact, we play new music which was written 300 years ago. Most of the music we perform has never been

played in recent times."

Banzo devotes a large portion of his time to discover these musical gems in cathedrals, monasteries, archives and libraries, not only in Spain but also in the lands of the now nonexistent Spanish empire ranging from Naples to South America.

"A lot of the music which has been totally lost in Spain itself can be found in places like Guatemala and other lands which were under Spanish influence. This ongoing research is part of my work and I really love to do it."

When asked to differentiate the Spanish baroque music from the Italian or French, Banzo explains that the "major difference is the color. Italian music is higher and the rhythms are very different as well."

The Spanish like unequal rhythms, they clash rhythms one against the other. You can hear this very well in the music we play and also by studying the differences between Spanish and Italian organs or harps. Spanish music is much more relaxed than Italian or French music and because a lot of it comes from the cathedrals, the emphasis on the texts is major."

In Israel only 10 out of the 18 musicians of Al Ayre Español will perform a program which is "typical for the Spanish cathedrals during the baroque. We will come with four singers and six instrumentalists, one of whom plays that very Spanish instrument, the castanets."

"I do not want to overemphasize the castanets but they have a very specific Spanish sound and are part of our tradition, so one cannot avoid them."

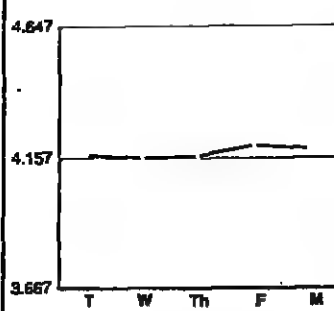
Al Ayre Español performs within the Authentic early music series this Thursday at the Noga Theater in Tel Aviv and Saturday at the Henry Crown Symphony Hall at the Jerusalem Theater, both at 8:30 p.m.



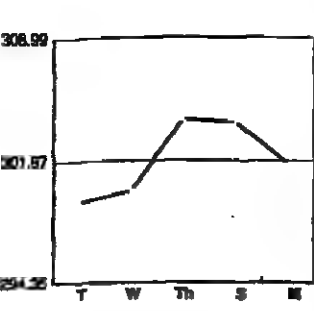
MARKETS

in brief

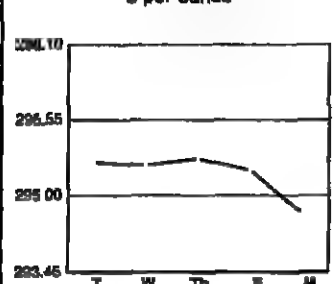
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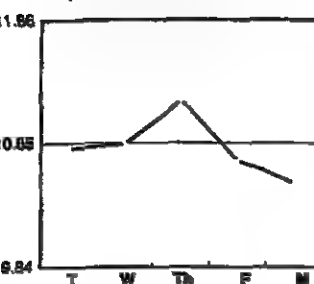
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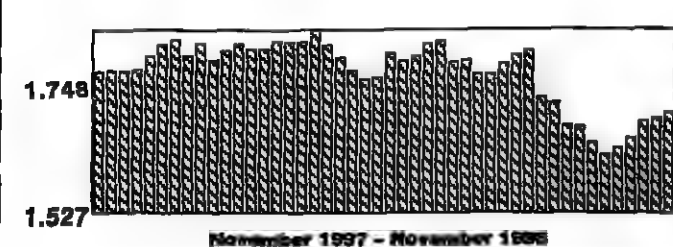
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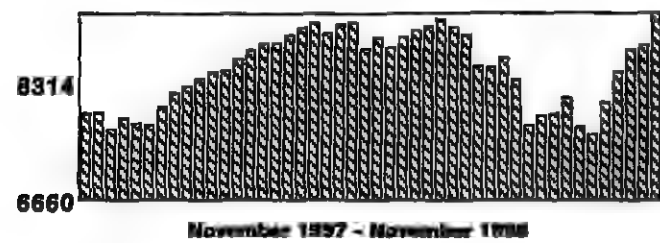
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Ernst & Young Israel expands

In the latest in a series of large mergers in the accounting industry, Haifa-based Ratzkovsky-Fried and Tel Aviv-based Mandala yesterday announced a merger with Kost, Forer and Gabbay, the local affiliate of international accounting firm Ernst & Young. The combined firm, Ernst & Young Israel, will employ 560. The firm said that it will provide services to 133 publicly traded companies and will focus on the high-tech, insurance, and retail industries. *Dan Gerstenfeld*

Schering-Plough to import Dead Sea products

US pharmaceutical company Schering-Plough has ordered products worth \$1.25 million from Belmon Nurit, the company yesterday said. Belmon added that Schering requested it to develop special products for the drug maker. The first order will be sent to the US next month and the company said it has received additional orders for 1999. *Dan Gerstenfeld*

Exports to the US up 10%

Exports to the US, excluding diamonds, rose 10 percent since the beginning of the year to \$3.7 billion, according to figures published yesterday by the Manufacturers Association. Imports from the US fell by 2.7% to \$4.2b. The figures were supplied ahead of a meeting of Israeli industrialists with representatives of 13 US states in the US today. *Dan Gerstenfeld*

Report: Hapoalim funds' favorite stock

Bank Hapoalim continues to be the most popular holding in the portfolios of the country's nine largest mutual funds, according to the quarterly survey by Meitav Securities and Investments. The report shows that funds hold Hapoalim shares worth some NIS 200 million. Bank Leumi came in second ahead of Makhteshim-Agan Industries, Bezeq, and Discount Investments. Meitav noted that despite their large market capitalization, Koor Industries and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries were not among the five most popular stocks. *Dan Gerstenfeld*

Chasm Group opens local office

The Chasm Group, a Silicon Valley-based consulting company, has chosen HK Catalyst as its local affiliate. Under the agreement HK, a high-tech advisory company, is also the merchant banking arm of European technology investment group Catalyst Partners. The Chasm Group, which was founded in 1992, provides consulting and education services to technology companies. Its clients include Hewlett-Packard, Bay Networks, Adobe, Intel, AT&T, IBM, Oracle, and Sun Microsystems. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Jordan, Egypt to link power systems

Jordan and Egypt will inaugurate the linkage of their electric power networks on December 10 at a meeting of the joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee in Amman, Suhair Amawi, head of economic cooperation in Jordan's Ministry of Industry and Trade, said yesterday. He added that the two countries also will sign an agreement on free trade and discuss other programs to improve economic cooperation. Plans call for the elimination of all customs duties between the two countries by 2005, Amawi said.

Mohammed Azzam Khamis, head of the planning department at Jordan's National Electric Power Co., said Jordan's share of the \$228.9 million electrical project is \$80.3 million. *AP*

Leumi 3rd-quarter net up 7%

Bank Leumi yesterday announced that third-quarter net profits rose 7.3 percent to NIS 226.7 million from NIS 211.3m. a year ago. It was the only bank showing growing profitability.

Net profit for the first three quarters fell 37.1% to NIS 667.9m. from NIS 1.06 billion in 1997. It should be noted however that last year's results included profit of NIS 494.7m. from the sale of the bank's holdings in Africa Israel and Leumi Insurance Holdings. Excluding this one time gain, net profit rose 17.9%.

Bank Hapoalim announced that third-quarter net profits fell 12.7% to NIS 235m. from NIS 270m. a year ago, while United Mizrahi Bank said that net profits dropped 50.7% to NIS 36.5m. from NIS 74m. The reports followed similar announcements made last week by Israel Discount Bank and the First International Bank of Israel which reported a decline of 52.4% and

23% respectively in net profit for the first three quarters.

Leumi said that without the impact of the consumer price index's calculation method, net profits would have grown by 45.3%.

The bank said that profitability was influenced by an increase of NIS 70.7m. in operating and other income, an increase of NIS 27.6m. in interest income before provision for doubtful debts, and an increase in the business operations, including a rise of 14.7% in credit to the public and an increase of 10.4% in deposits from the public. In addition, provision for doubtful debt fell by NIS 150m.

Leumi said, however, that profitability was offset by an increase in operating expenses and a decline of NIS 19.3m. in its share in profits from affiliated companies.

The bank added that its subsidiary Israel Credit Cards (ICC), which was until recently the only

COMPANY RESULTS

BY DAN GERSTENFELD

provider of Visa in Israel, is expected to show a considerable decline in profitability following the introduction of Visa Alfa by the FIBI group. The bank said that ICC's third quarter income fell although it refrained from providing further information.

Bank Hapoalim reported that net profit for the first three quarters declined 0.8% to NIS 871m. from NIS 878m.

It said that without the effect of the CPI calculation method, net profits for the first three quarters rose 11.2% to NIS 934m. from NIS 840m.

The bank said that profitability was also influenced by a decrease in profits from financing activity, an

increase in expenses, costs arising from the provision for the voluntary employee retirement program, and a decrease in its share in net profits from affiliated companies.

The decrease was somewhat offset by a decline in the provision for doubtful debts, an increase in operating and other income, and an increase in profits from extraordinary transactions.

Net return on equity was 12.4%, compared to 13.6% in the same period last year.

Hapoalim said that profit from financing activity before the provision for doubtful debts fell 4.3% to NIS 2.86b., while the provision for doubtful debts fell 23.7% to NIS 446m.

United Mizrahi Bank said that net profit for the first three quarters fell 33% to NIS 127.4m. from NIS 189.9m. The bank attributed the decline to a 54.9% rise in pro-

vision for doubtful debt and a 4.4% decrease in income from financing activities before provisions to doubtful debts.

In addition, Mizrahi's income from its subsidiaries fell sharply to NIS 58.4m. from NIS 105.6m., mainly due to a decrease in the profitability of Tefahot Israel Mortgage Bank.

IDB Development Corp. said that third-quarter net profits fell to NIS 238.17m. from 349.1m. a year earlier, while its subsidiary IDB Holding Corp. said net profit decreased to NIS 20.05m. from NIS 141.28m.

IDB Development said that during the first three quarters net income fell to NIS 238.2m. from NIS 349.1m., as revenues fell sharply to NIS 508.7m. from NIS 1.05b.

The company said that the decline is an outcome of the economic slowdown and the global financial crises.

Deutsche Bank, BT seal historic merger

By DAVID CROSSLAND

FRANKFURT (Reuters) — Deutsche Bank AG said yesterday it had sealed a takeover of Bankers Trust in a deal worth \$10.1 billion which will create the world's largest bank in asset terms.

The supervisory boards of both banks on Sunday approved a "definitive agreement" under which Deutsche will acquire all outstanding shares of the common stock of Bankers Trust at \$93 per share, Deutsche said in a statement.

Shares in Deutsche bank fell initially as the terms of the deal were announced, but rallied to gain DM 2.35 to 108.30 by 1230 GMT. Bankers Trust shares closed at 85-13/16 in New York on Friday.

Rolf Breuer, chief executive of the German bank, told a news conference that Bankers Trust had been his "first choice" and that he had not sought a merger with any larger US investment bank.

Deutsche, Germany's largest bank, said the acquisition would establish a "global platform for profitable growth," bringing DM 1.7 billion a year in savings and enabling 5,500 jobs to be cut across the board.

Most of the job cuts would come in London and New York, he said.

The German bank said it would finance the takeover partly through a capital increase of DM 4b. That is less than expected by analysts, many of whom had predicted Deutsche would raise at least half the purchase price by issuing equity.

The remaining part of the purchase price will be financed using available liquid funds and instruments, such as participatory capital, bonds and convertible bonds or bonds with warrants on Deutsche's own shares and "third-party shares".

By this, Breuer spelled out that Deutsche may cut back its industrial shareholdings by issuing bonds convertible into the bank's own shares and industrial holdings. Deutsche owns large stakes in major German corporates including DaimlerChrysler AG and builder Philipp Holzmann.

Breuer made clear however that Deutsche had no plans to sell its stake of more than 10 percent in DaimlerChrysler.

The acquisition is subject to the approval of shareholders representing two thirds of all Bankers Trust shares and of US, European, and German regulatory authorities.

The deal will create a financial giant with more than \$800 billion in assets, consigning Union Bank of Switzerland to second place in the world league table.

Market observers say the purchase will help Germany's largest bank fulfill its dream of a sizeable presence in the US, the world's biggest and most innovative market for capital, but warn that the deal entails considerable risks.

It will also make up for a series of high-level departures in Deutsche's investment banking business this year which culminated in the defection of its entire, more than 100-strong California-based Technology Group to Credit Suisse in July.

"The main challenge for Deutsche will be managing risk because its earnings will become a lot more volatile," said Brita Graf, banking analyst at BNP in Frankfurt, who said the capital increase was in line with her



Deutsche Bank spokesman Rolf E. Breuer (left) shakes hands with Bankers Trust chairman Frank N. Newman prior to yesterday's news conference in Frankfurt, Germany, where Breuer announced the \$10.1b. merger that creates the world's largest financial institution, with assets of more than \$800b. *(AP)*

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"The main challenge for Deutsche will be managing risk because its earnings will become a lot more volatile," said Brita Graf, banking analyst at BNP in Frankfurt, who said the capital increase was in line with her

expectations. It will also face a dilemma in integrating Bankers Trust: how to keep control of it while at the same time giving it a sufficiently long leash to prevent defections.

Breuer said the bank had put aside \$400 million to retain key staff. Against this, it expected to pay out about DM 2b. in severance pay for those laid off, it added.

Graf, echoing other analysts, said the purchase would not plug holes in Deutsche's mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance and advisory business.

But it will give Deutsche a lead-

ing global position in global custody, asset management and private banking for wealthy clients, Graf said.

Breuer, an eloquent investor, banker who has promoted Anglo-Saxon ideas of shareholder value and transparency at Deutsche, will face questions on how he plans to integrate a bank whose corporate culture is far more aggressive and risk-taking than his own.

He will also have to justify his bank's expansion into investment banking at a time when financial market turbulence has shown the potential cost of that strategy.

MKs delay vote over central bank reform

By Jerusalem Post Staff

A vote in the Knesset Finance Committee yesterday over a bill aimed at establishing a board of governors in the Bank of Israel was postponed yesterday at the request of Labor MK Avi Yehzekel.

A committee appointed by the government, and headed by Supreme Court Justice Dov Levin, is expected to submit its proposals on the matter later this month.

The bill, introduced by Avraham Shohat (Labor), aims to reduce the powers of the governor of the central bank.

Coalition whip Meir Shetret said the discussion had to be

delayed since the forum only saw the bill for the first time yesterday, and added that it is inconceivable that a vote would take place before the Levin committee submitted its recommendations.

Governor Jacob Frenkel has repeatedly said he is not opposed to the establishment of a board, and that the differences between him and his opponents are over the way in which the board's members would be chosen and the way their powers would compare with the governor's.

Treasury Director-General Benzion Zilberfarb said there is no argument over the need to maintain the central bank's indepen-

dence, but the Ministry of Finance thinks it would be inappropriate for it to present its detailed position before the Levin committee's recommendations.

Frenkel, who also appeared before the committee, said that 35 countries have changed their central bank laws in a manner that stresses price stability, an element which is missing from Shohat's bill.

Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism) said the bill now seems to be proposed in the context of recent events in the economy, and must therefore not be decided before the Levin committee files its recommendations.

LIFFE falls silent

By MARTIN HAYES

LONDON (Reuters) — Traders on LIFFE swapped their multi-colored jackets and verbal jousting for silent computer terminals yesterday as London's premier futures and options exchange finally embraced new technology.

LIFFE, the London International Financial Futures Exchange, turned on its hi-tech Connect electronic screen trading system at 0905 GMT for 75 individual equity options.

"It went very well. Things have been quiet. I don't think any of us wished to have a very volatile day on the first day," a director at one options firm said.

Others reported a similar experience with the new technology. Volumes were light, which helped ensure a smooth transition.

"As far as putting orders through and getting fills back at reasonable levels it seems to be all right... Overall volumes have been low over the last few weeks, so it is

quiet. We will have a better idea once we start having busier days," another trader said.

For traders, the switch to office-based screen trading signals the end of an era and the loss of the camaraderie typical of the noisy and volatile Cannonbridge trading floor.

"They have all got a steep learning curve ahead of them. They will be more active a week from now, and more active in a month than they are this week," the director said.

LIFFE was forced to bring in the new Connect system and move away from open outcry trading after a dramatic loss of business to the German-Swiss electronic exchange Eurex, which overtook LIFFE to become Europe's largest derivatives market earlier this year.

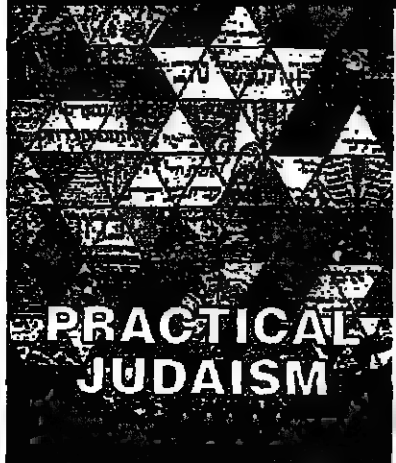
LIFFE hopes that the belated introduction of electronic trading — more contracts will migrate to the screens in 1999 — will rejuvenate the market, which recently launched a top-to-bottom strategic overhaul.

"The launch of LIFFE Connect is a major step forward in achieving one of our key objectives which is to provide our customers with a state-of-the-art electronic trading platform," LIFFE Chief Executive Hugh Freedberg said. "This establishes one of the cornerstones upon which the future of the exchange will be built."

Equity options are the first leg in LIFFE transferring its contracts off the floor. UK long gilt and five-year gilt futures are scheduled next on April 12, 1999.

"This move will greatly improve the attractiveness of traded options, giving a boost to a market which has enormous potential for growth, particularly in the new EMU environment," Tony Hawes, project director for LIFFE Connect said.

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סניף מרכזי

Keeping swimwear afloat

After buying 80% of the family-owned Gottex, Africa-Israel is struggling to restore profitability in what was once a fashion darling of the rich and famous

One glance at the new Gottex swimwear catalog is enough to reveal that something fundamental has changed. For starters, the gold is gone, as are the florid, outdated prints and the lavish details. The lines are simpler, cleaner and trendier.

This is the most visible result of what has been a very dramatic year for one of the world's most famous swimwear companies.

In November 1997, debt-ridden Gottex, a family-owned concern based near Ben-Gurion Airport, was bought by real-estate giant Africa-Israel. Once the darling of the rich and famous, with customers that included Princess Diana, Elizabeth Taylor, Cindy Crawford, Princess Caroline of Monaco and Brooke Shields, Gottex had quietly been slipping into disrepair.

In 1997, it reached its lowest ebb. Sales had fallen from a peak of \$70 million to some \$40m., losses had risen substantially. The company was out of date and out of touch. Saddled with debts of \$20m., it faced imminent receivership.

Africa-Israel came in like a hurricane, sweeping away the old order and installing new management, new marketing procedures, new production and even new designs. More than 170 people lost their jobs, and virtually every area of the company was transformed.

One year on, the process is far from complete, but Simcha Kynan, managing director of the company, now called Gottex Models, believes it is well on its way to success.

GOTTTEX has a truly Israeli history. It was founded by Leah and Armin Gottlieb, refugees who arrived from Hungary in 1949 and settled in Jaffa. They began by making raincoats, but after a number of short Israeli winters, they realized that the potential market was far too limited. In 1956, they shifted to swimwear.

It was an almost instant success. Designed by Leah, the bathing suits won enormous acclaim. Initially, the Gottliebs concentrated on the local market, but the Gottex brand name soon became internationally famous. In its heyday during the 1970s, the company exported its swim- and beachwear to 90 odd countries, won countless design awards and sold in all the best stores around the world, including Harrods, Bloomingdales, Saks and Galleries Lafayette.

"Leah Gottlieb became known as the goddess of swimwear fashion, and Gottex was the temple," says Kynan. "She created unique and special designs inspired by ethnic prints from places such as Morocco and Mexico. She used a

lot of gold, and her prints often contained 25 colors, which as people in the printing business know, is very complicated and unusual."

"Gottex was always different," agrees Chaim Barkan, chairman of Gottex.

In the early '90s, however, the company made a fatal error. Fashion suddenly took a turn toward simple, austere lines, but Leah ignored this movement and continued to design lavish and colorful creations that looked increasingly unfashionable and out of date.

On top of this, the company was struggling with internal problems. Always a family business, the Gottliebs insisted on being involved in the company's management.

"They tried to manage all aspects of the business on a day to day level, while actually their main tasks should have been creation and design," says Kynan.

"They brought in managers, but because of their history and because it was a family business, it just didn't work. The managers either left or were asked to leave."

In addition, the company had not updated its operations for years. "They worked on quite old-fashioned systems, both for managing and organizing the factories as well as the technology," says Kynan.

Consequently, they began experiencing difficulties delivering goods on time around the world, leading to even more customer disappointment.

Despite all these troubles, the Gottliebs began to over-extend themselves, expanding their business into new product areas such as lingerie, shoes and bags. "The thinking was right in terms of marketing," says Kynan. "But they tried to do it themselves, and it created even bigger losses for the company."

Throughout 1997 the company held discussions with potential investors, but with little success as the family refused to give up control. In November, when they realized they were at the end of the line, they finally gave up the struggle, selling off 80% of the business to Africa-Israel. They still retain the remaining 20%.

Under the terms of the agreement, Africa-Israel assumed the company's debt of \$20m. and the family's personal loan guarantees. It spent another \$6m. updating and renewing equipment and procedures.

It was Africa-Israel's first foray into the fashion business, and it caused a great deal of speculation since the ownership of the holding company had recently moved into the hands of Israeli entrepreneur Lev Leviev. Some suggested he might try to tone down the swim-

suits and make them more modest. Others wondered why he would be interested in such a company in the first place.

Barkan dismisses these fears. "Lev Leviev is a businessman, and for him it was a business opportunity. He's not bringing his personal life into the business. The swimsuits are created by our designers according to fashion trends."

Barkan believes the decision to buy Gottex was a natural move. "We are an investment company with interests in many different fields. We saw in Gottex a good

COMPANY FOCUS

Gottex Models Ltd.
Founded: 1956
Employees: 450 in Israel, 15 in the US
Owners: Africa-Israel (80%), the Gottlieb family (20%)
Sales, 1997: \$40m.
Loss, 1997: \$15m.



Gottex, '90s-style: Updating floral prints while financially shifting from red to black

investment which we knew we could turn around in a matter of years."

The Gottlieb family, he adds, spent years building up a platform and even the rails for the train, but unfortunately they didn't have the power to bring the train any further.

"As businessmen, we saw what they had already achieved and knew that in no more than three years we could bring the business to where it should be as an international brand name."

WITH this in mind, the last 12 months have been busy ones. The new collection has been updated substantially. "There's less gold and more technique," says Barkan. "We're combining traditional Gottex elements such as flowers and prints with the new technologies now available to give a very strong uplift to our collection. It's a new look, but it's still a Gottex look. We will again become the leaders."

Aside from a complete reorganization of the business, Africa-Israel's new management team are all pros from the fashion and textile business, something that Barkan believes was missing from the previous management.

"We have the tools to run the manufacturing side of the business in a different way," says Barkan. "We can change systems and bring in new systems of work."

Part of this new system was to lay-off workers. The staff of 570 at the Israel headquarters has been cut to 450. Staff at the US office has been reduced from 70 to 15.

"If the previous owners couldn't lay off people they'd worked with for 30 to 40 years, for us it was quite easy," says Barkan, harshly. "Many of the people were past pension age, but still worked in the factory. Some were ashamed to leave the company because they'd worked with the Gottliebs for so long."

Kynan and Barkan have also introduced new marketing strategies. They plan to develop lines of Gottex products across the world by granting licenses to certain manufacturers.

Negotiations are already taking place with companies in the Far East, Europe and South America for products such as lingerie, underwear, cosmetics, shoes, bags, watches, sunglasses and ready-to-wear fashion.

Companies that win the licenses will use some of Gottex's marketing channels and tools.

In Israel, a trial of a new ready-to-wear girls' clothing line, Gottex Girl, is already being sold in the market. Gottex has also signed with another Israeli company and next season a line of Gottex socks and panties will be on the market.

"Everything will remain around the woman's body," says Barkan. "We won't give licenses for cars. It's a very difficult job to find the right licensee to do the job as it should be done. If something happens to them it affects your own business. When Marks and Spencer closed down in Israel, it affected their brand name in Europe as well."

In an effort to win back customer confidence, Kynan and Barkan have made sure that this year's collection is in the shops at exactly the right moment. Stores in the US already have the new 1999 collection on the shelves. So do stores in Eilat and the Caribbean, where winter cruises are already under way.

"It's very important," says Barkan. "We want our customers to recognize and understand that now a new organization has been set up which will be able to meet their demands. For years they've been hearing promises that the goods will be delivered on time. We want to offer more than just promises, but to actually deliver the goods; this year we will have the right fashion which will be in the sites at the right time."

In terms of competition, Kynan believes that despite the problems, Gottex never lost its strong brand name. "We are one of the top brand names. Our collection this year received very positive feedback. We haven't lost our leadership."

By the end of 1998 Kynan and Barkan expect to see sales of less than \$40m. "We decided to make a smaller turnover, but bring more profit in," says Barkan. "We will still have losses, but they will be hundreds of percent lower than last year's."

By the end of 1999, they believe the company will be profitable again.

Once Gottex reaches profits of between \$10m. and \$15m., there are plans to take it public. Micha Goldberg, banking analyst at Nessuah Zannex Securities, believes profits may be possible in this time frame.

"Gottex did some good things in the first half of the year when it fired staff and closed down operations, but it isn't going to be profitable overnight. I'm not too optimistic in the near future. A turnaround will happen, but it takes longer than a few months," says Goldberg.

"We aren't running," says Barkan. "Slowly-slowly is the way to do business. If someone wants to see a miracle in one year, they'll be disappointed. If they want to see one in two to three years - they will. It's very little time to make such a change. We already have the brand name and the sales outlets, now we just have to carry on and make money."

THE CONFERENCE CIRCUIT

By GREGG FAY CASHMAN

- 1.12** The Center for the Human Rights of Disabled People is sponsoring a conference on **Community Living for People with Mental Disabilities**. The focal point of the conference at ZOA House in Tel Aviv is everyone's right to housing in the community.
- 1.12** The 12th International Conference on Quality Control will open at the Jerusalem International Convention Center with the emphasis on "Fifty years of quality." The conference will deal with quality standards in a variety of disciplines.
- 3.12** Kfar Hamaccabiah in Ramat Gan has been selected as the venue for the Annual General Meeting of the Israel Manufacturers Association. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has indicated that he will attend. Participants will attempt to formulate a 10-year plan for the IMA for the first decade of the new millennium.
- 3.12** Aviation and Tourism in the Year 2000 - Veteran Rivals or Collaborators? This is the question being posed to participants of the annual Mordchei Ben-Ari memorial conference. Ben-Ari was the former chairman and director-general of El Al during the period 1967-1980. The conference will be held at Beit Hafeizoth on the campus of Tel Aviv University. Speakers from El Al and numerous branches of the travel and tourism industries, as well as academics representing hotel schools, will ponder the question.
- 3.12** What are the implications of Bug 2000, and who bears the responsibility? Clues pertaining to the double conundrum can be gleaned at a morning conference at Gan Oranin in Tel Aviv, where speakers will discuss the preparedness of insurance and technology companies for the problems which may arise.
- 5.12** Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman will be the guest of honor at the opening of Media '99, the annual three-day conference of
- the advertising industry, at the Dan Panorama Hotel, Tel Aviv. Among the subjects tabled for discussion are: "Advertising strategies during a period of economic crisis"; "The advertising campaign that helped sweep Ron Huldai into office as mayor of Tel Aviv"; "Have advertising agents forgotten that commercials are supposed to first and foremost sell?"; "Successes and failures"; and "Survivors in the field."
- 7.12** Microsoft Israel is sponsoring a study day on Windows '98 at the Dan Carmel Hotel, Haifa. The conference is targeted at proprietors of small businesses.
- 8.12** The Second Scientific Conference of the Federation of the Israeli Societies of Experimental Biology will be held at the Dan Hotel, Eilat. Professor Eitana Padan of the Silberman Institute of Life Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is the organizer of the three-day event.
- 9.12** The Ministry of Tourism is one of the sponsors of a conference on **Preparations of the Tourist Industry for the Year 2000**. The conference, to be held at the Council for a Beautiful Israel in Tel Aviv, will review preparedness to-date and attempt to determine what still needs to be done.
- 9.12** The whole world is focusing on 2000. But what will happen next? The Israel Future Association, in conjunction with the Israel Management Center, is holding an afternoon seminar at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv, entitled **Beyond 2000. How Will We Live? How Will We Manage? How Will We Work?** The keynote address will be delivered by Professor William E. Hatal, who will speak on "The new management and the infinite resource." Other subjects to be discussed include: "The world of future business and economics"; "Future technologies industries ahead for 2000-2030"; "Molecular biology in the year 2000"; and other futuristic topics.

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Volvo to cut 5,300 jobs to pare costs

GOTHENBURG, Sweden - Volvo AB, the Swedish car and truck maker, said it will cut 5,300 jobs worldwide to reduce costs as demand for cars slows.

The world's No. 2 truckmaker said the move, which will shrink its workforce by 7.3 percent, will lower costs by 3 billion kronor (\$367 million) a year and help the company reach its growth and profit goals.

Volvo is battling recession in Asia, where it sells 6% of its cars, and slower growth in Europe and the US. It's the latest carmaker to announce job cuts and follows Rover Group's plans to cut 2,500 at its Longbridge plant and Ford Motor Co., which aims to cut 2,300 in Belgium.

The company wants "to make the same number of cars with fewer people," said Mats Liss, an analyst at Swedbank Markets.

Volvo shares rose 8 kronor, or 2.7%, to 195.5, the biggest percentage gain in an index of European auto stocks. The shares are up about 13% since Nov. 17 when papers first reported job reductions could be in the works.

The move will shave Volvo's costs of 139 billion kronor by about 2%. Volvo is shooting for sales of 250 billion kronor by 2000, up from 184 billion kronor in 1997. The company also wants to expand its operating margin to between 5% and 7% from 4.6% last year.

"It should help Volvo reach its profitability objective by 2000, although it's early days yet," said Stephen Reitman, an analyst at Merrill Lynch in London.

Volvo employed a total of 72,900 at the end of last year, of which about 44,000 were in Sweden. Volvo employs more than 16,000 white-collar workers globally. The company also said it wants to lower the number of

consultants it uses by 700 from just under 2,100 now.

"It will be necessary to establish a reserve for restructuring costs in Volvo's accounts for the fourth quarter this year," said Leif Johansson, Volvo Chief Executive. "The size of this reserve will be determined during December this year."

ABOUT 1,900 jobs will be cut in the car unit, while 1,000 will be cut in the truck unit. The bus unit and construction equipment unit will both reduce the workforce by about 900 employees each. The remaining jobs will be taken from the aero unit, the marine engines - or pentas - unit and from other operations, Volvo said.

Of the reductions outside Sweden, 1,100 will be asked to leave in Europe, while 1,000 employees in North America and another 600 in other parts of the world will be affected.

"There is still much work remaining in order for us to be able to attain our profitability goal," said Johansson.

"Consequently, efforts are now being turned toward improving the group's internal efficiency." Europe's seventh-biggest carmaker said the cuts, which will be completed by the middle of next year, will apply to 3,100 managers and other office staff and 2,200 assembly line workers. Of the jobs cuts, 2,600 are based in Sweden and the remaining 2,700 are based abroad.

"Everyone is working on reducing costs - it has to be done to follow the market in this business," said Swedbank's Liss. "Internal effectiveness in the different units can be improved regarding functions like administration and marketing."

(Bloomberg)

MARKET WATCH

By DAN KESTENBAUM

The Israeli economy is clearly facing difficult times, said Ron Lubash, managing director of Lehman Brothers (Israel), the local outlet of the fourth largest US investment bank.

Similar warnings, like those routinely issued by opposition MKs or the Manufacturers Association, are usually received with some skepticism, since the speakers are known to represent vested interests.

The Lehman Brothers statement should therefore be taken more seriously, since it comes from one of the most influential and impartial actors in the local investment scene.

Lubash, however, has his own agendas and shouldn't be viewed as a totally independent observer. It's interesting to note, however, that despite the fact that most overseas investment institutions strive to present the Israeli economy to their clients in the most positive light, Lubash's forecast is exceptionally sober.

"1999 will be an average year," said Lubash. "It will be worse than 1998, but better than 2000."

Set against the backdrop of slowing activity overseas, the Israeli economy should not be expected to return to growth in the near future.

"With negative growth, a combination of unemployment, inflationary pressures and high interest rates, the trend is negative," concludes Lubash, who was asked by Lehman to open its local branch in Tel Aviv in 1994.

According to him, the global economy has peaked and is now at the beginning of a down cycle.



Events in Russia, Brazil and Japan indicate that economic conditions have deteriorated, and although stock market indices are currently hitting new records, optimism on Wall Street is far from justified, and will in fact lead to worsening conditions.

Lubash added that investors have adopted a more cautious approach. The fact that economists failed to predict the Russian crisis led to a real change in investors' willingness to take risks.

WHEN Lubash tries to convince Lehman's clients to invest in Israel, his main objective is to explain to them that Israel is not an emerging market. The inclusion of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange in the emerging market indices of Morgan Stanley and the International Finance Corporation was one of the main reasons for the investor rally on the local bourse. However, the fact that Israel is currently associated with the failing group of emerging markets hurts its image.

"Israel should shun the label

'emerging market,'" Lubash said. "My hope is that investors will see the Israeli market in the same light as Europe's smaller economies."

DESPITE the gloomy outlook for the local economy and the workforce cutbacks at Wall Street firms, Lehman has not reduced its activity in Israel. The local branch, which was involved in the financing of deals worth a total of some \$9 billion since it started operating here, is the foreign investment institution with the highest activity in Israel - well ahead of all its competitors. 1998 itself was a record year for the local office, which participated in financing deals worth some \$3.5b., including the debt issues of the Israel Electric Corp. and the government on the US bonds market, where some \$2.25b. was raised.

Lehman also took part in share issues by Bank Leumi and Bank Hapoalim to foreign institutional investors, and has been involved in a number of large deals including the merger of ECI Telecom and Tadiran Telecommunications,

and Koor Industries' offer to buy out Tadiran's shares.

Lubash said that Lehman is committed to extending its activity in Israel. The bank believes that the economy is sound and offers many opportunities since the business sector requires more sophisticated financial services. In addition, the rapid growth of the high-tech sector will increase demand for foreign-investment houses' services.

According to Lubash, Lehman is benefiting from a new generation of young investors and entrepreneurs who want their activities to match international standards. He added that in recent years, Israeli executives have become more open to seeking advice from professional consultants.

Lehman has participated in the past in a large number of IPOs of Israeli companies that went public on Wall Street. Lubash believes that local companies should be able to return and raise money in New York early next year, but this opportunity will be limited to large and well-established compa-

nies, or firms which operate in fashionable fields such as the Internet.

Smaller firms, which won't be able to raise capital by offering shares, will have to do so by forming strategic alliances with foreign companies. As a result, Lubash predicts that the number of local companies that will be acquired by foreign institutions will continue to rise in coming years.

Lubash goes against the grain suggesting that the Israeli high-tech revolution has gone too far. "Start-up is nice, but it consumes much capital and wastes research resources," as most of those companies will ultimately be forced to close shop.

Despite the fact that a large part of Lehman's activity here is linked to high-tech, Lubash rejects the conventional wisdom that the technology sector is the locomotive that will pull Israel out of the current recession. Unfortunately, the high-tech sector will not be the cure-all for everything that ails the local economy.

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Blackhawks beat Oilers to earn 2,000th win



EDMONTON (AP) — Right wing Tony Amonte scored his 18th goal of the season and the Chicago Blackhawks earned their 2,000th franchise win in the NHL, a 3-2 victory over the Edmonton Oilers on Sunday.

Amonte, who shares the league lead in goals with Philadelphia's John LeClair, tipped a shot from the right circle at 2:18 of the second period to give Chicago a 3-1 lead. The Blackhawks halted a four-game losing streak, winning for only the second time in 16 games since October 24.

Flyers 6, Canucks 2
John LeClair scored four goals and Eric Lindros had four assists as host Philadelphia racked up its sixth win in seven games.

LeClair broke a 2-2 tie with 5:07 left in his 17th goal and third of the game, flicking in a rebound on Eric Lindros' miss.

Less than a minute later, Keith Jones took a pass from Lindros and one-timed a slap shot past Garth Snow as the Flyers improved to 6-1 after an 0-5-2 winless streak.

Rangers 5, Predators 1
Petr Nedved scored for the first time since his holdout for more than a season, pacing the host Rangers.

Nedved, in his third game with the Rangers since being traded from Pittsburgh, scored from the right circle at 7:40, sending New York on the way to a 3-0 first-period lead.

Wayne Gretzky, Adam Graves, Brian Leach and Kevin Stevens also scored for the Rangers. Darren Turcotte scored for Nashville.

Red Wings 4, Sharks 1
Backup goalie Norm MacIver won his fourth straight start and Stacy Roest scored his first goal in the NHL as Detroit won at home. Uwe Krupp, Martin Lapointe



ON ALL FOURS — Flyers goalie Ron Hextall goes down to make the save on a shot by Canucks Markus Naslund (l). Philadelphia won 6-2.

and Darren McCarty also scored for the Red Wings, who have won five straight after losing six of their previous eight.

MacIver stopped 19 shots to cap off a homestand sweep which also included Anaheim, Vancouver and San Jose. In the four games, he yielded only four goals. He was only 2:30 away from his first shutout when Jeff Norton scored for the Sharks.

Hurricanes 3, Mighty Ducks 1
Nolan Pratt broke a 1-1 tie with his first NHL goal with 11:43 left

as host Carolina won its 11th straight.

It was the first goal by a Carolina defenseman in 12 games and the first by Pratt in 43 games spanning three seasons.

Sabres 6, Lightning 3
Michael Peca had two goals and Dominik Hasek stopped 30 shots as visiting Buffalo handed the Lightning its eighth straight loss.

Peca's second goal, on a slap shot from the right circle, put the Sabres up 5-3 with 6:46 left in the third period.

Nashville 0-10-1
First Period: 1-0 New York, Nedved 1 (Sandstrom, Krupp), 7:40. 2. New York, Gretzky 1 (Stevens, MacIver), 10:20. 3. New York, Graves 1 (Schneider, Snow), 14:12 (pp). Second Period: 1-0 Nashville, Turcotte 1 (Fitzgerald, Korb), 5:30. 3. New York, Leach 1 (Gretzky, MacIver), 11:58 (pp). Third Period: 0-0. New York, 3-0. Shots on goal: Nashville 5-15-25. New York 13-17-35. Goalies: Nashville, Duran. Flyers: New York, Fichter, A-18,200.

San Jose 0-0-1
First Period: 0-0. Second Period: 0-0. Third Period: 1-0. San Jose, 1-0. Shots on goal: San Jose 0-0-1. Goalies: San Jose, Vernon. Detroit, Maracle, A-18,283.

Anheim 0-10-1
First Period: 0-0. Second Period: 0-0. Third Period: 1-0. Anheim, 1-0. Shots on goal: Anheim 0-0-1. Goalies: Anheim, Hebert. Carolina, Irie, A-6,871.

Vancouver 1-10-2
First Period: 1-0. Second Period: 0-0. Third Period: 0-0. Vancouver, 1-0. Shots on goal: Vancouver 1-10-2. Goalies: Vancouver, Scott. St. Louis, 5.

Philadelphia 6-2-3
First Period: 2-0. Second Period: 2-0. Third Period: 2-0. Philadelphia, 6-2-3. Shots on goal: Philadelphia 6-2-3. Goalies: Philadelphia, Hextall, A-18,200.

Buffalo 2-2-3
First Period: 1-0. Second Period: 1-0. Third Period: 0-0. Buffalo, 2-2-3. Shots on goal: Buffalo 2-2-3. Goalies: Buffalo, Hasek, Tampa Bay, Schwab, Hartford, A-9,351.

Chicago 2-10-8
First Period: 1-0. Second Period: 1-0. Third Period: 0-0. Chicago, 2-10-8. Shots on goal: Chicago 2-10-8. Goalies: Chicago, Hnatk, A-18,200.

Edmonton 0-0-1
First Period: 0-0. Second Period: 0-0. Third Period: 1-0. Edmonton, 0-0-1. Shots on goal: Edmonton 0-0-1. Goalies: Edmonton, Hnatk, A-18,200.

St. Louis 0-0-1
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NFL

Continued from Page 18

Buccaners 31, Bears 17

Brian Hunter caught an unusual touchdown pass just before the end of the first half to snap a 17-1 tie and help visiting Tampa Bay end its three-game losing streak. It was the fourth straight loss for Chicago.

On the final play of the first half, Tampa Bay quarterback Trent Dilfer heaved the ball into the end zone and into a scrum of players. Tampa receiver Bert Emanuel got his hands to the ball and tipped it toward the sidelines to Hunter. Hunter had gone out of bounds on the play, but the 45-yard TD catch was allowed because he had returned to the field and an eligible receiver had touched the ball before he did. Replays, however, showed that the ball had touched the ground before Hunter scooped it up.

Patriots 20, Bills 21
Drew Bledsoe flipped the winning touchdown pass with a fractured finger for the second time in seven days and kept host New England in the thick of the playoff race.

With no time but one play left after a defensive pass interference call in the end zone against Henry Jones, Bledsoe threw a 1-yard pass to Ben Coates, and New England

beat the Buffalo Bills 25-21. The win moved the Patriots (7-5) into a tie with the Bills, one game behind the New York Jets and Miami in the AFC East, as Buffalo lost for just the second time in nine games. And Bledsoe, coming in a stadium where he had been 10-0.

Packers 24, Eagles 16
The heavily-favored host Packers needed career days from running back Darick Holmes and wideout Bill Schroeder to slip past Philadelphia.

Holmes rushed for a career-best 163 yards on 26 carries and Schroeder caught five passes for a career-high 128 yards in his first NFL start as the Packers (8-4) held off the Eagles (2-10) in a game that was much closer than anybody could have expected.

Green Bay, an 18-point favorite, trailed 13-10 in the third quarter after third-string quarterback Koy Detmer, making his first NFL start, guided the Eagles on two long scoring drives that he capped with TD tosses of 16 and 4 yards to Jeff Graham.

Redskins 29, Raiders 19
Trent Green threw three scoring passes and visiting Washington forced three turnovers as the Redskins spoiled Jeff George's return and won on the road for the first time this season. The loss also hurt the chances that the Raiders (7-5) will make the playoffs for

the first time since 1993. The Redskins (3-9) have won three of five after opening the season with seven straight losses.

Seahawks 20, Oilers 18

Jon Kitna threw two touchdown passes and drove host Seattle into position for the winning field goal with one second left.

Todd Peterson kicked a 48-yard field goal after Kitna marched the Seahawks (6-6) from their 29 to the Oilers' 30 after Al Del Greco's 42-yard field goal put Tennessee ahead 18-17 with 33 seconds to go.

In games reported in yesterday's edition:

Ravens 38, Colts 31

Jim Harbaugh hit Floyd Turner with a 22-yard TD pass and Priest Holmes ran 36 yards for his second touchdown that rallied host Baltimore for 17 fourth-quarter points.

It was the first time the Colts had played in Baltimore since Robert Irsay moved the franchise to Indianapolis in 1984.

Jaguars 34, Bengals 17

Jacksonville improved to 9-3 for the first time in its four years and opened a two-game lead in the AFC Central Division, which the Jaguars have never won.

Jets 48, Panthers 21

Curtis Martin and Keyshawn Johnson ran 60 and 35 yards for touchdowns and Vinny Testaverde completed 16 of 21 passes for 255 yards and two TDs for the hosts.

kick, 7:34. A-73,218.

Tennessee 3-9-12-18
First Quarter: Ten-FG Del Greco 36, 5:49. Second Quarter: Ten-FG Del Greco 30, 5:57. Sea-FG Peterson 50, 3:03. Third Quarter: Sea-Galloway 7 pass from Kitna (Peterson kick), 6:52. Fourth Quarter: Ten-FG Del Greco 43, 11:54. Sea-McKnight 59 pass from Kitna (Peterson kick), 11:54. Ten-McNair 3 run (pass failed), 4:58. Ten-FG Del Greco 42, 3:58. Sea-FG Peterson 48, 3:01. A-69,049.

Washington 7-10-20-29
First Quarter: Was-S.D. Davis 19 pass from Green (Blanchard kick), 10:08. Oak-Kaufman 23 run (G.Davis kick), 4:04. Second Quarter: Was-Shepherd 43 pass from Green (Blanchard kick), 6:52. Was-FG Blanchard 28, 2:04. Third Quarter: Was-Shepherd 43 pass from Green (Blanchard kick), 14:55. Oak-McNair 12 pass from Holmes (pass failed), 5:40. Was-FG Blanchard 47, 3:42. Oak-T.Brown 2 pass from Holmes (pass failed), 1:35. A-41,409.

Arizona 0-10-7-24
First Quarter: KC-Morris 2 run (Stoyanovich kick), 6:13. Second Quarter: Ari-FG Medwed 37, 14:53. KC-Bernett 3 pass from Gannon (Stoyanovich kick), 10:51. Ari-Morris 10 pass from Plummer (Medwed kick), 2:25. Third Quarter: KC-Alexander 30 pass from Gannon (Stoyanovich kick), 12:05. KC-FG Stoyanovich 18, 1:57. A-69,913.

Indianapolis 17-17-0-31
First Quarter: Ind-FG Vandenberg 33, 10:06. Bal-FG Stover 48, 8:25. Ind-Park 34 pass from Manning (Vandenberg kick), 4:45. Ind-Park 88 run (Vandenberg kick), 1:56. Fourth Quarter: Bal-Holmes 24 pass from Manning (Vandenberg kick), 11:42. NY-Chenail 36 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 12:11. Cal-Wells 2 pass from Beuerlein (Kasay kick), 3:28. NY-FG Hall 38, 2:23. Fourth Quarter: Car-Lane 2 run (Kasay kick), 12:13. NY-Chenail 21 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 9:37. A-71,501.

Carolina 7-0-7-21
First Quarter: NY-FG Hall 30, 7:31. Car-Lane 1 run (Kasay kick), 3:09. NY-Martin 60 run (Hall kick), 12:03. NY-Safety, Beuerlein tackled in end zone, 11:42. NY-Chenail 36 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 12:11. Cal-Wells 2 pass from Beuerlein (Kasay kick), 3:28. NY-FG Hall 38, 2:23. Fourth Quarter: Car-Lane 2 run (Kasay kick), 12:13. NY-Chenail 21 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 9:37. A-71,501.

Atlanta 10-10-10-10
First Quarter: NY-FG Hall 30, 7:31. Car-Lane 1 run (Kasay kick), 3:09. NY-Martin 60 run (Hall kick), 12:03. NY-Safety, Beuerlein tackled in end zone, 11:42. NY-Chenail 36 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 12:11. Cal-Wells 2 pass from Beuerlein (Kasay kick), 3:28. NY-FG Hall 38, 2:23. Fourth Quarter: Car-Lane 2 run (Kasay kick), 12:13. NY-Chenail 21 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 9:37. A-71,501.

San Diego 5-7-0-10
First Quarter: NY-FG Hall 30, 7:31. Car-Lane 1 run (Kasay kick), 3:09. NY-Martin 60 run (Hall kick), 12:03. NY-Safety, Beuerlein tackled in end zone, 11:42. NY-Chenail 36 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 12:11. Cal-Wells 2 pass from Beuerlein (Kasay kick), 3:28. NY-FG Hall 38, 2:23. Fourth Quarter: Car-Lane 2 run (Kasay kick), 12:13. NY-Chenail 21 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 9:37. A-71,501.

San Francisco 8-3-0-10
First Quarter: NY-FG Hall 30, 7:31. Car-Lane 1 run (Kasay kick), 3:09. NY-Martin 60 run (Hall kick), 12:03. NY-Safety, Beuerlein tackled in end zone, 11:42. NY-Chenail 36 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 12:11. Cal-Wells 2 pass from Beuerlein (Kasay kick), 3:28. NY-FG Hall 38, 2:23. Fourth Quarter: Car-Lane 2 run (Kasay kick), 12:13. NY-Chenail 21 pass from Testaverde (Hall kick), 9:37. A-71,501.

San Jose 0-0-1
First Quarter: NY-FG Hall 30, 7:31. Car-Lane 1 run (Kasay kick),

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Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

Berkovic's brother heads for Arsenal

By OFER RONEN-ABELS

Sixteen-year-old Nir Berkovic, who now plays soccer for Neve Yosef in Haifa, will follow his brother's footsteps later on this month with a transfer to England.

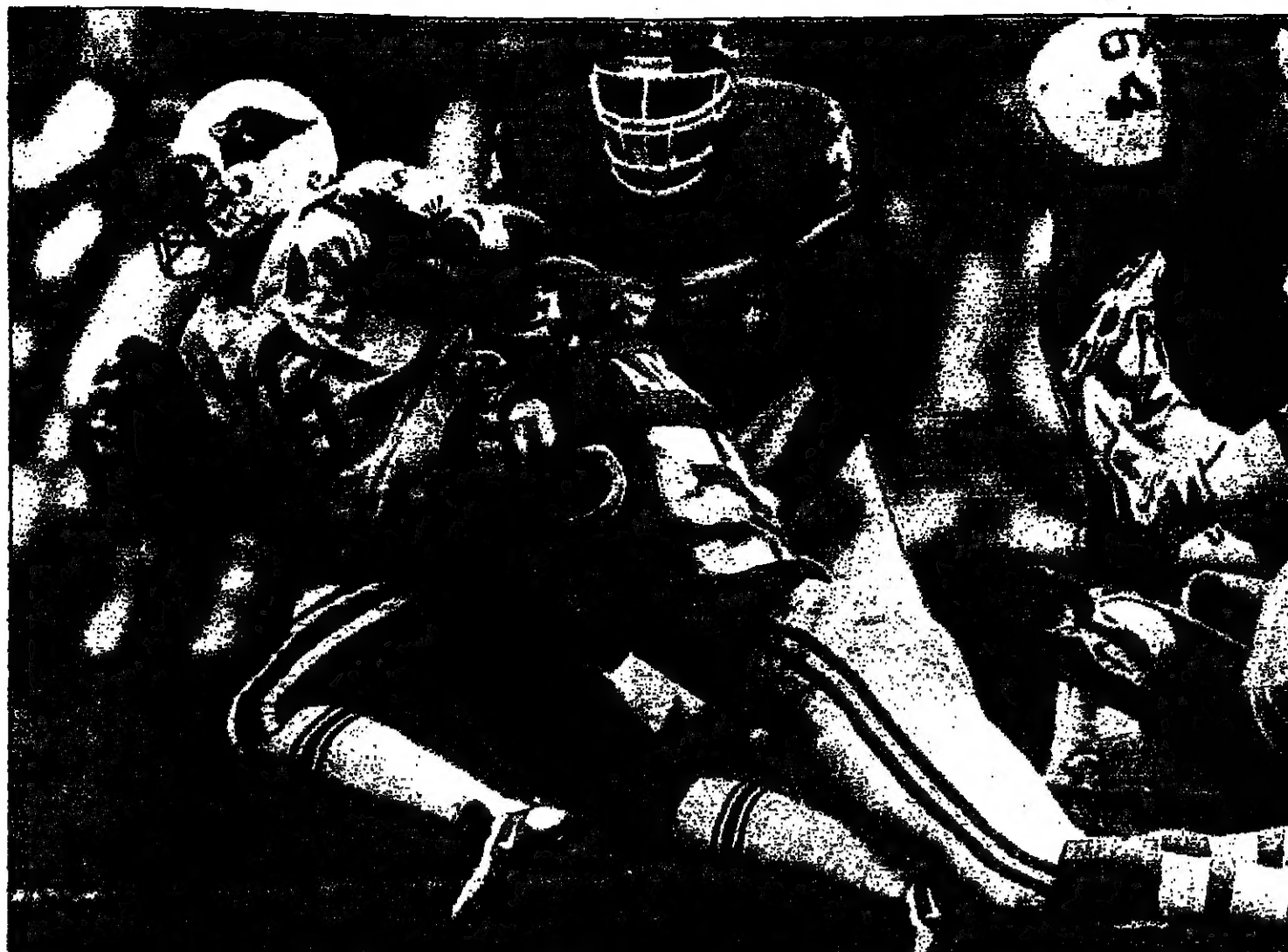
Nir, who was released by his former club Maccabi Haifa only a week ago, will complete the move and join the Gunners youth team.

Young Berkovic who started the year on Belgium side Anderlecht's books can't wait to join the big north London side and is excited with the prospect of moving nearer to his older brother Eyal, who stars in West-Ham's midfield.

Ze'ev Berkovic, the father of the talented duo told *The Jerusalem Post* that the deal was struck in the last few days between Eyal and Arsenal's vice chairman David Dein. According to the agreement, Nir will remain with Arsenal for at least two years until he joins the IDF at 18.

Nir, continued the father, has learned a lot during the months he spent with Anderlecht and signing for a professional club of Arsenal's caliber can only do him good.

In other news, US billionaire Ronald Lauder has decided not to buy Betar Jerusalem but might opt for a one-time payment to cover the team's tax debts. The total amount of the payment is believed to be NIS 5 million, of which NIS 1m has already been handed over.



QUARTERBACK FORTUNES - Left: Chiefs' Anthony Davis (50) sacks Arizona QB Jake Plummer in third-quarter action. Kansas City won 34-24. Right: QB Drew Bledsoe embraces coach Pete Carroll after a last-play TD pass gave Patriots 25-21 win over Bills. (Reuters)

DeBerg sparks Falcons to postseason berth

Marino sets career TD passing mark; Broncos roll on at 12-0



ST. LOUIS (AP) - Jamal Anderson ran for a career-high 188 yards and 44-year-old Steve DeBerg threw a 29-yard touchdown

pass to Terance Mathis as Atlanta (10-2) clinched an NFL playoff berth earlier than ever before with a 31-10 victory over St. Louis on Sunday.

DeBerg took over in the second

half for Tony Graziani, who started in place of the injured Chris Chandler.

His TD pass came after the Falcons, who led 3-0 at the half, fell behind when Tony Horne of the Rams (10-2) returned the second-half kickoff 101 yards for a score. Anderson added a 27-yard TD run.

The game drew a crowd of 47,971, lowest since the Rams moved to St. Louis in 1995.

Dolphins 30, Saints 10
Dan Marino threw three touchdown passes to O.J. McDuffie.

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becoming the first player in NFL history to reach 400 career TD passes, as the Dolphins (8-4) stayed in a tie with the Jets in the AFC East by overcoming an early 10-3 lead by the Saints (5-7).

Marino hit McDuffie with a 22-yard scoring pass late in the second quarter, then reached the milestone by hitting McDuffie with a

4-yard TD toss on the first play of the fourth quarter.

They hooked up again on a 9-yard TD pass with 7:34 left to cap the scoring.

Broncos 31, Chargers 16
John Elway had four first-half turnovers but finished with a season-high four touchdown passes as visiting Denver remained unbeaten after 12 games.

The Broncos became the fourth team in NFL history to start 12-0 or better. Only the 1972 Miami Dolphins went undefeated the whole way, finishing 17-0 after

winning the Super Bowl.

The Broncos began the game as AFC West champions, having earned the title when Oakland lost to Washington earlier in the day. San Diego (5-7) lost to the Broncos for the second time in three weeks.

Elway threw two touchdowns passes to Ed McCaffrey and one each to Rod Smith and Shannon Sharpe.

NFL rushing leader Terrell Davis carried 24 times for 74 yards and has 1,566 overall, the third straight year he's surpassed 1,500.

Chiefs 34, Cardinals 24

Rich Gannon's three touchdown passes enabled host Kansas City to overcome a rash of penalties and mistakes and snap its six-game losing streak.

The Chiefs (5-7) took a 31-17 lead with 10:26 left when Derrick Alexander scored his second TD on a 15-yard pass from Gannon. But the Cardinals answered with an 80-yard drive and made it 31-24 on Mario Bates' 1-yard plunge with 6:07 remaining.

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Aussies take Ashes lead with 7-wicket win

PERTH (AP) - A remarkable spell of fast bowling by comeback kid Jason Gillespie spearheaded Australia to a comprehensive seven-wicket win in under three days in the second cricket Test at the WACA yesterday.

Australia, set to make 64 runs to win, had a three-wicket setback a half hour before tea, but emerged to take a 1-0 lead in the five-Test series after the Brisbane Test ended in a thud, rainy draw.

The Wough twins - Steve and Mark - took Australia from 36 for three to 64 for three, remaining unbeaten on 15 and 17 respectively.

Resuming the day on 126 for five, still two short of making Australia bat again, England was bowled out for 191 just 10 minutes before the lunch break.

After bowling out England for 112, Australia scored 240 to take a 125-run lead.

Gillespie, playing his first Test in 15 months since the 1997 Ashes series, dismissed four English batsmen in the space of six balls.

Gillespie, 23, was forced to return home after the Test in Trent Bridge and missed 12 Test matches with a stress fracture in his lower back. He was the 12th man in Brisbane.

The three-day finish is the second in three Ashes contests following England's 19-run win at the Oval in the last Test in 1997.

Australia's push for victory on the second day was stalled by a spirited 91-run sixth-wicket stand between Mark Ramprakash and Graeme Hick after coming together at 67 for five just after tea.

Hick, in his seventh-Test, comeback, pummeled the Australians for 68 off 73 balls with eight fours and two sixes.

Once Gillespie accounted for Hick with his

second ball of the day - caught by Ricky Ponting at third slip - the rest capitulated, leaving Ramprakash high and dry on an unbeaten 47.

It was another all-too-familiar England collapse. Its fourth in as many innings in the two Test series.

England, having recovered from 67 for five to 158 with a further fall, lost the last five wickets for 33 runs in 11.2 overs to Gillespie.

Gillespie, who was hit for 69 in his nine overs on the second day, including 23 in one, took 5-15 in 35 balls after replacing fellow fast bowler Glenn McGrath at the Lillee-Marsh stand end.

In the first innings, England was shot out for 112, losing the last five wickets for 38 runs.

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THE WEATHER

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ISRAEL

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Israel: Partly sunny today with a pleasant after-noon. Highs from the mid-20s in the north to near 30 in the south.

Egypt

Eilat 25/11

EUROPE WEATHER TODAY

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's high and tonight's low.

ISRAEL CITIES

City	Today High/Low	Wednesday High/Low	Thursday High/Low	Friday High/Low
Ashdod	17/12	17/12	17/12	17/12
Beersheva	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Dead Sea	24/7	24/7	24/7	24/7
Eilat	25/7	25/7	25/7	25/7
Haifa	21/10	21/10	21/10	21/10
Jerusalem	15/1	15/1	15/1	15/1
Katmon	15/1	15/1	15/1	15/1
Netanya	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Tel Aviv	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Thessalon	22/7	22/7	22/7	22/7

Weather (W): sunny, partly cloudy, cloudy, showers, thunderstorms, rain, snow, fog, ice, etc.

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

City	Today High/Low	Wednesday High/Low	Thursday High/Low	Friday High/Low
Amsterdam	5/11	5/11	5/11	5/11
Berlin	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Bombay	32/24	32/24	32/24	32/24
Buenos Aires	13/1	13/1	13/1	13/1
Calcutta	32/24	32/24	32/24	32/24
Chicago	13/5	13/5	13/5	13/5
Frankfurt	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Hong Kong	25/7	25/7	25/7	25/7
Jerusalem	24/7	24/7	24/7	24/7
London	9/4	9/4	9/4	9/4
Los Angeles	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Madrid	14/6	14/6	14/6	14/6
Mexico City	22/7	22/7	22/7	22/7
Montreal	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Moscow	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
New York	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Paris	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Prague	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Rio de Janeiro	25/7	25/7	25/7	25/7
Rome	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Sydney	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Tokyo	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Toronto	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Vienna	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1
Washington	19/6	19/6	19/6	19/6
Zurich	10/1	10/1	10/1	10/1

The British Council presents The ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY production of

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Jerusalem, The Jerusalem Theatre - Sun. Mon. 20-21.12.98, 8:30 p.m. Tel. 02-5605755
Beer Sheva Conservatorium - Tue. 22.12.98, 8:30 p.m. Tel. 07-6206230
Rehovot, Wix Auditorium - Wed. 23.12.98, 8:30 p.m. Tel. 08-9343207, 08-9467890
Karmiel, Municipal Cultural Hall - Thur. 24.12.98, 9:00 p.m. Tel. 04-9987951
Bat Gabriel at Kinneret - Fri. 25.12.98, 9:30 p.m. Tel. 06-6751175
Haifa, Beit Abba Houshi - Sat. 26.12.98, 8:30 p.m. Tel. 04-8384777
Tel Aviv, Museum of Art - Mon. Tue. Wed. 28-29.12.98, 8:30 p.m. Tel. 03-6961297
Hadran-Tel. 03-5279797, Kassel-Tel. 03-6044725, Mofaim-Tel. 09-7415566

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Worried Juventus confirm match vs. Galatasaray

TURIN (Reuters) - Juventus confirmed yesterday they would travel to Istanbul for their politically charged Champions' League soccer match against Galatasaray but said they were still worried for their safety.

"We are ready to leave but we are not going calmly to play a match which simply does not offer calm," Juventus general manager Luciano Moggi said.

"We don't want to play at a neutral ground. We just want guarantees that we are taking a group of young players to play a football match rather than taking them into war."

European soccer's governing body UEFA has said the group B match will go ahead tomorrow with increased security.

"We feel 99.9 percent sure that everything will be done to ensure the safety of Juventus," said a UEFA spokesman.

The match was postponed from last Wednesday due to a wave of anti-Italian sentiment in Turkey over Rome's failure to extradite Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, arrested in Italy earlier this month.

Turkey holds Ocalan responsible for thousands of deaths in 14 years of conflict between his Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Turkish security forces.

Juventus goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi said the Turin side wanted to fly to Turkey as late as possible before kickoff and leave immediately after the match.

מכרז מן הארץ